Please check the examination details below before entering your candidate information

Candidate surname	Other names

Centre Number | Candidate Number

Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9–1)

Wednesday 17 May 2023

Morning (Time: 1 hour 45 minutes)

Paper reference **1ET0/01**

English Literature

PAPER 1: Shakespeare and Post–1914 Literature

You must have:
Questions and Extracts Booklet (enclosed)

Total Marks

Instructions

- Use **black** ink or ball-point pen.
- **Fill in the boxes** at the top of this page with your name, centre number and candidate number.
- Answer the question on **one** text from Section A and **one** text from Section B.
- You should spend about 55 minutes on Section A.
- You should spend about 50 minutes on Section B.
- Answer the questions in the spaces provided
  – *there may be more space than you need.*

Information

- This is a closed book exam.
- The total mark for this paper is 80.
- The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets
  – *use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question.*
- The marks available for the accuracy of your writing are clearly indicated.

Advice

- Read each question carefully before you start to answer it.
- Check your answers if you have time at the end.

Turn over ▶

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SECTION A

Shakespeare

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number: **Question 1** ☒ **Question 2** ☒ **Question 3** ☒

Question 4 ☒ **Question 5** ☒ **Question 6** ☒

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TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 40 MARKS

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SECTION B

Post-1914 Literature

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☒	**Question 8** ☒	**Question 9** ☒
Question 10 ☒	**Question 11** ☒	**Question 12** ☒
Question 13 ☒	**Question 14** ☒	**Question 15** ☒
Question 16 ☒	**Question 17** ☒	**Question 18** ☒
Question 19 ☒	**Question 20** ☒	**Question 21** ☒
Question 22 ☒	**Question 23** ☒	**Question 24** ☒
Question 25 ☒	**Question 26** ☒	**Question 27** ☒
Question 28 ☒	**Question 29** ☒	**Question 30** ☒

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TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 40 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 80 MARKS

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Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9–1)

Wednesday 17 May 2023

Morning (Time: 1 hour 45 minutes)

Paper reference **1ET0/01**

English Literature

PAPER 1: Shakespeare and Post-1914 Literature

Questions and Extracts Booklet

Do not return this Booklet with the Answer Booklet.

Turn over ▶

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Answer the question on ONE text from Section A and ONE text from Section B.

The extracts for use with Section A are in this question paper.

SECTION A – **Shakespeare**	**Page**
1 (a) and **1(b)** – *Macbeth*	4
2 (a) and **2(b)** – *The Tempest*	6
3 (a) and **3(b)** – *Romeo and Juliet*	8
4 (a) and **4(b)** – *Much Ado About Nothing*	10
5 (a) and **5(b)** – *Twelfth Night*	12
6 (a) and **6(b)** – *The Merchant of Venice*	14

SECTION B – **Post-1914 Literature**	**Page**
EITHER	
British Play	
7 OR 8 – *An Inspector Calls*: J B Priestley	16
9 OR 10 – *Hobson's Choice*: Harold Brighouse	17
11 OR 12 – *Blood Brothers*: Willy Russell	18
13 OR 14 – *Journey's End*: R C Sherriff	19
15 OR 16 – *The Empress*: Tanika Gupta	20
17 OR 18 – *Refugee Boy*: Benjamin Zephaniah (adapted by Lemn Sissay)	21
OR	
British Novel	
19 OR 20 – *Animal Farm*: George Orwell	22
21 OR 22 – *Lord of the Flies*: William Golding	23
23 OR 24 – *Anita and Me*: Meera Syal	24
25 OR 26 – *The Woman in Black*: Susan Hill	25
27 OR 28 – *Coram Boy*: Jamila Gavin	26
29 OR 30 – *Boys Don't Cry*: Malorie Blackman	27

SECTION A

Shakespeare

Answer the question on ONE text from this section.

You should spend about 55 minutes on this section.

You should divide your time equally between parts (a) and (b) of the question.

***Macbeth* – from Act 1 Scene 7, lines 35 to 67**

In this extract, Lady Macbeth reacts to Macbeth's decision that they must not go ahead with their plan to kill Duncan.

LADY MACBETH

Was the hope drunk,
Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since?
And wakes it now to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour,
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
Like the poor cat i'the adage?

MACBETH

Prithee, peace.
I dare do all that may become a man –
Who dares do more is none.

LADY MACBETH

What beast was't then
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man!
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both.
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dashed the brains out! – had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

MACBETH

If we should fail, –

LADY MACBETH

We fail?
But screw your courage to the sticking-place

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And we'll not fail! When Duncan is asleep
(Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him), his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail so convince,
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbeck only.

1 (a) Explore how Shakespeare presents the character of Lady Macbeth in this extract.

Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Lady Macbeth appears to have power over her husband.

Explain the importance of power **elsewhere** in the play.

In your answer, you **must** consider:

- where power is shown
- the effects power has within the play.

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(20)

(Total for Question 1 = 40 marks)

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***The Tempest* – from Act 4 Scene 1, lines 1 to 32**

In this extract, Prospero promises that Ferdinand may marry his daughter, Miranda.

PROSPERO
(*To* FERDINAND) If I have too austerely punished you,
Your compensation makes amends: for I
Have given you here a third of mine own life,
Or that for which I live – who once again
I tender to thy hand. All thy vexations
Were but my trials of thy love, and thou
Hast strangely stood the test. Here, afore Heaven,
I ratify this my rich gift. O Ferdinand!
Do not smile at me that I boast her off,
For thou shalt find she will outstrip all praise,
And make it halt behind her.

FERDINAND
I do believe it,
Against an oracle.

PROSPERO
Then, as my gift, and thine own acquisition
Worthily purchased, take my daughter. But
If thou dost break her virgin-knot before
All sanctimonious ceremonies may
With full and holy rite be ministered,
No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall
To make this contract grow. But barren hate,
Sour-eyed disdain and discord shall bestrew
The union of your bed with weeds so loathly
That you shall hate it both. Therefore take heed,
As Hymen's lamps shall light you!

FERDINAND
As I hope
For quiet days, fair issue, and long life,
With such love as 'tis now, the murkiest den,
The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion
Our worser genius can, shall never melt
Mine honour into lust, to take away
The edge of that day's celebration –
When I shall think, or Phoebus' steeds are foundered,
Or Night kept chained below.

PROSPERO
Fairly spoke.
Sit, then, and talk with her. She is thine own.

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2 (a) Explore how Shakespeare presents the character of Prospero in this extract.

Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Prospero tells Ferdinand that he must be obedient and do what he has been told to do.

Explain the importance of obedience **elsewhere** in the play.

In your answer, you **must** consider:

- where obedience is presented
- the effects of characters doing what they are told.

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(20)

(Total for Question 2 = 40 marks)

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***Romeo and Juliet* – from Act 5 Scene 1, lines 1 to 33**

In this extract, Romeo thinks about a dream that has made him feel happier.

ROMEO
If I may trust the flattering truth of sleep,
My dreams presage some joyful news at hand.
My bosom's lord sits lightly in his throne,
And all this day an unaccustomed spirit
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.
I dreamt my lady came and found me dead –
Strange dream, that gives a dead man leave to think! –
And breathed such life with kisses in my lips
That I revived and was an emperor.
Ah me! How sweet is love itself possessed,
When but love's shadows are so rich in joy!

Enter* BALTHASAR *(Romeo's servant), in riding-boots.
News from Verona! How now, Balthasar?
Dost thou not bring me letters from the Friar?
How doth my lady? Is my father well?
How fares my Juliet? That I ask again,
For nothing can be ill if she were well.

BALTHASAR
Then she is well, and nothing can be ill.
Her body sleeps in Capel's monument,
And her immortal part with angels lives.
I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault,
And presently took post to tell it you.
O pardon me for bringing these ill news,
Since you did leave it for my office, sir.

ROMEO
Is it e'en so? Then I defy you, stars!
Thou know'st my lodging. Get me ink and paper –
And hire post-horses. I will hence tonight.

BALTHASAR
I do beseech you, sir, have patience.
Your looks are pale and wild, and do import
Some misadventure.

ROMEO
Tush, thou art deceived.
Leave me, and do the thing I bid thee do.
Hast thou no letters to me from the Friar?

BALTHASAR
No, my good lord.

ROMEO
No matter. Get thee gone,
And hire those horses. I'll be with thee straight.

***Exit* BALTHASAR**

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3 (a) Explore how Shakespeare presents the character of Romeo in this extract.

Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Romeo suffers when he hears the shocking news about Juliet.

Explain the importance of suffering **elsewhere** in the play.

In your answer, you **must** consider:

- how suffering is shown
- the effects suffering has within the play.

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(20)

(Total for Question 3 = 40 marks)

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***Much Ado About Nothing* – from Act 4 Scene 1, lines 20 to 51**

In this extract, Claudio announces that he will not marry Hero because she is not a virgin.

CLAUDIO
Stand thee by, Friar. Father, by your leave:
Will you with free and unconstrainèd soul
Give me this maid, your daughter?

LEONATO
As freely, son, as God did give her me.

CLAUDIO
And what have I to give you back, whose worth
May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?

DON PEDRO
Nothing, unless you render her again.

CLAUDIO
Sweet Prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.
There, Leonato, take her back again:
Give not this rotten orange to your friend.
She's but the sign and semblance of her honour.
Behold how like a maid she blushes here!
O, what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal!
Comes not that blood as modest evidence
To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear,
All you that see her, that she were a maid
By these exterior shows? But she is none.
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed.
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

LEONATO
What do you mean, my lord?

CLAUDIO
Not to be married;
Not to knit my soul to an approvèd wanton.

LEONATO
Dear my lord, if you in your own proof
Have vanquished the resistance of her youth,
And made defeat of her virginity –

CLAUDIO
I know what you would say. If I have known her,
You will say she did embrace me as a husband,
And so extenuate the 'forehand sin.
No, Leonato,
I never tempted her with word too large,
But, as a brother to his sister, showed
Bashful sincerity and comely love.

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4 (a) Explore how Shakespeare presents the character of Claudio in this extract.

Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Claudio believes that he has been tricked into marrying Hero.

Explain the importance of tricking others **elsewhere** in the play.

In your answer, you **must** consider:

- the ways others are tricked
- the effects tricking others has.

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(20)

(Total for Question 4 = 40 marks)

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***Twelfth Night* – from Act 4 Scene 3, lines 1 to 33**

In this extract, Sebastian feels as though he has walked into a dream.

SEBASTIAN
This is the air; that is the glorious sun;
This pearl she gave me, I do feel 't and see 't;
And though 't is wonder that enwraps me thus,
Yet 't is not madness. Where's Antonio then?
I could not find him at the Elephant;
Yet there he was, and there I found this credit,
That he did range the town to seek me out.
His counsel now might do me golden service;
For though my soul disputes well with my sense
That this may be some error, but no madness,
Yet doth this accident and flood of fortune
So far exceed all instance, all discourse,
That I am ready to distrust mine eyes,
And wrangle with my reason that persuades me
To any other trust but that I am mad
Or else the lady's mad; yet if 't were so,
She could not sway her house, command her followers,
Take and give back affairs and their dispatch
With such a smooth, discreet, and stable bearing
As I perceive she does. There's something in 't
That is deceivable. But here the lady comes.

***Enter* OLIVIA *and a* PRIEST.**

OLIVIA
Blame not this haste of mine. If you mean well,
Now go with me and with this holy man
Into the chantry by; there, before him,
And underneath that consecrated roof,
Plight me the full assurance of your faith,
That my most jealous and too doubtful soul
May live at peace. He shall conceal it
Whiles you are willing it shall come to note,
What time we will our celebration keep
According to my birth. What do you say?

SEBASTIAN
I'll follow this good man, and go with you;
And, having sworn truth, ever will be true.

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5 (a) Explore how Shakespeare presents the character of Sebastian in this extract.

Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Sebastian suggests that marrying Olivia would be beneficial to his social position.

Explain the importance of social position **elsewhere** in the play.

In your answer, you **must** consider:

- the way social position is shown
- the effects of social position within the play.

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(20)

(Total for Question 5 = 40 marks)

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***The Merchant of Venice* – from Act 1 Scene 3, lines 101 to 136**

In this extract, Shylock is reminding Antonio how badly the merchant has treated him in the past.

SHYLOCK
Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and my usances.
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine –
And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help.
Go to, then – you come to me, and you say,
'Shylock, we would have moneys.' – You say so –
You that did void your rheum upon my beard,
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold – moneys is your suit.
What should I say to you? Should I not say
'Hath a dog money? Is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' – Or
Shall I bend low, and in a bondman's key,
With bated breath and whisp'ring humbleness
Say this:
'Fair sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last –
You spurned me such a day – another time
You called me dog – and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much moneys'?

ANTONIO
I am as like to call thee so again –
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friends – for when did friendship take
A breed for barren metal of his friend?
But lend it rather to thine enemy –
Who if he break, thou mayst with better face
Exact the penalty.

SHYLOCK
Why, look you how you storm!
I would be friends with you, and have your love,
Forget the shames that you have stained me with,
Supply your present wants, and take no doit
Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me.

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6 (a) Explore how Shakespeare presents the character of Shylock in this extract.

Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Shylock explains how he is prepared to be friends with Antonio.

Explain the importance of friendship **elsewhere** in the play.

In your answer, you **must** consider:

- where friendship is shown
- the effect of friendship within the play.

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(20)

(Total for Question 6 = 40 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 40 MARKS

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SECTION B

Post-1914 Literature – British Play OR British Novel

Answer ONE question from this section, on EITHER a British Play OR a British Novel.

You should spend about 50 minutes on this section.

BRITISH PLAY

***An Inspector Calls*: J B Priestley**

Your response will be marked for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation.

EITHER

7 **Sheila:** *I have an idea – and I had it all along vaguely – that there was something curious about him. He never seemed like an ordinary police inspector.*

In what ways is mystery significant in the play?

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 7 = 40 marks)

OR

8 **Sheila:** *You're squiffy.*

Eric: *I'm not.*

Mrs Birling: *What an expression, Sheila! Really the things you girls pick up these days!*

Explore the importance of the younger generation in *An Inspector Calls*.

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 8 = 40 marks)

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***Hobson's Choice*: Harold Brighouse**

Your response will be marked for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation.

EITHER

9 **Hobson:** *I'm warning you your conduct towards your parent's got to change.*

Explain the relationship between Maggie and Hobson in the play.

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 9 = 40 marks)

OR

10 **Maggie:** *You can afford five hundred pounds and you're going to pay five hundred pounds.*

How is money important in *Hobson's Choice*?

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 10 = 40 marks)

***Blood Brothers*: Willy Russell**

Your response will be marked for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation.

EITHER

11 Narrator: *So did y' hear the story of the Johnstone twins?*
As like each other as two new pins ...

Explore the significance of the Narrator in *Blood Brothers*.

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 11 = 40 marks)

OR

12 Mickey: *You shot him, you shot him.*

In what ways is violence important in the play?

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 12 = 40 marks)

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***Journey's End*: R C Sherriff**

Your response will be marked for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation.

EITHER

13 Colonel: *Very well done, Raleigh. Well done, my boy. I'll get you a Military Cross for this! Splendid!*

How is bravery presented in the play?

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 13 = 40 marks)

OR

14 Osborne: *What kind of soup is this, Mason?*

Mason: *It's yellow soup, sir.*

Osborne: *It's got a very deep yellow flavour.*

Explain how humour is significant in *Journey's End*.

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 14 = 40 marks)

***The Empress*: Tanika Gupta**

Your response will be marked for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation.

EITHER

15 Victoria: *We are after all the Empress of India and it is only fitting that we should be waited upon by such a noble gentleman of that land.*

In what ways is Queen Victoria significant in the play?

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 15 = 40 marks)

OR

16 Dadabhai: *According to Lord Salisbury it is because an English constituency is not ready to elect a 'Black man', to represent them.*

Explore how prejudice is important in *The Empress*.

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 16 = 40 marks)

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***Refugee Boy*: Benjamin Zephaniah (adapted by Lemn Sissay)**

Your response will be marked for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation.

EITHER

17 Mrs Fitzgerald: *Alem, until you can go back home, you want to stay here with us, don't you? Not at the children's home.*

How are Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald significant in the play?

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 17 = 40 marks)

OR

18 Alem (reading a letter from his father): *Please son, I want you to be strong, now I need you to be strong more than ever, and your mother would want you to be strong.*

Explain how courage is important in *Refugee Boy.*

You **must** refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 18 = 40 marks)

BRITISH NOVEL

***Animal Farm*: George Orwell**

Your response will be marked for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation.

EITHER

19 *Napoleon took no interest in Snowball's committees. He said that the education of the young was more important than anything.*

In what ways is education important in *Animal Farm*?

You **must** refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 19 = 40 marks)

OR

20 *… old Major, the prize Middle White boar, had had a strange dream on the previous night and wished to communicate it to the other animals.*

Explore the significance of old Major in the novel.

You **must** refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 20 = 40 marks)

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***Lord of the Flies*: William Golding**

Your response will be marked for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation.

EITHER

21 *To keep a clean flag of flame flying on the mountain was the immediate end and no one looked further.*

Explain the significance of different symbols in *Lord of the Flies*.

You **must** refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 21 = 40 marks)

OR

22 *Here, invisible yet strong, was the taboo of the old life. Round the squatting child was the protection of parents and school and policemen and the law.*

In what ways is human nature presented in the novel?

You **must** refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 22 = 40 marks)

***Anita and Me*: Meera Syal**

Your response will be marked for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation.

EITHER

23 *I had never realised there were so many mothers in the village, and it seemed each one either came to our door … bearing gifts or full of advice.*

Explore the importance of mothers in the novel.

You **must** refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 23 = 40 marks)

OR

24 *'Anger is good! But not used this way! Please! You're going the wrong way!'*
(Uncle Alan speaking to Sam Lowbridge)

How is anger significant in *Anita and Me*?

You **must** refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 24 = 40 marks)

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***The Woman in Black*: Susan Hill**

Your response will be marked for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation.

EITHER

25 *… her pent-up hatred and desire for revenge permeated the air all around.*
(Jennet Humfrye, the woman in black)

How is obsession significant in the novel?

You **must** refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 25 = 40 marks)

OR

26 *I had a sudden vision of that row of small, solemn faces, with hands all gripping the railings, that surrounded the school yard.*

Explore the importance of children in *The Woman in Black*.

You **must** refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 26 = 40 marks)

***Coram Boy*: Jamila Gavin**

Your response will be marked for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation.

EITHER

27 *Otis Gardiner, pots man, Jack-of-all-trades and smooth-tongued entrepreneur, ranted non-stop.*

In what ways is Otis Gardiner/the Coram Man/Mr Gaddarn significant in the novel?

You **must** refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 27 = 40 marks)

OR

28 *'No one knows about the child except the four of us. Remarkably, the secret has been well kept.'* **(Mrs Lynch)**

Explain the importance of secrets in *Coram Boy*.

You **must** refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 28 = 40 marks)

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***Boys Don't Cry*: Malorie Blackman**

Your response will be marked for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation.

EITHER

29 *I was off to university in less than a month and there was no way I was going to let Melanie and some baby ruin my plans ...* **(Dante)**

Explain the significance of Dante in the novel.

You **must** refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 29 = 40 marks)

OR

30 *'Of course I know Adam is gay. I've come to terms with that.'* **(Dad/Tyler Bridgeman)**

How are different attitudes to sexuality presented in *Boys Don't Cry*?

You **must** refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(includes 8 marks for the range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and accurate use of spelling and punctuation)

(Total for Question 30 = 40 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 40 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 80 MARKS

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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

In this extract Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a ferocious and calculating persuader, a woman who attacks her husband's love, courage and manhood in turn until his resistance collapses. Her speech appears to pour out in rage, yet its shape is controlled: she moves from mockery, to accusation, to a horrifying image of violence, and finally to a practical plan, so that by the end she has taken command of both the argument and the murder.

She opens with a barrage of rhetorical questions: "Was the hope drunk, / Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since?" The personified "hope" is treated as a drunkard who wakes with a hangover, "green and pale", which turns Macbeth's moral hesitation into something shameful and sickly rather than principled. Her questions allow no answer, and the enjambment drives the lines forward so that Macbeth has no space to speak. Her cold declaration, "From this time / Such I account thy love", is short and blunt, and she makes his love for her conditional on the murder, using emotional blackmail as a weapon.

Lady Macbeth then targets his courage. "Art thou afeard" is a direct, almost childish taunt, and the contrast between "act and valour" and "desire" exposes the gap between what he wants and what he dares to do. The antithesis of "I dare not" and "I would" is sharpened by the proverb of "the poor cat i'the adage", which wanted the fish but would not wet its paws. Comparing a celebrated warrior to a timid cat is deliberately humiliating, and the adjective "poor" drips with contempt.

When Macbeth insists that he dares "do all that may become a man", she seizes his own word. "What beast was't then" turns his claim upside down, implying that

Question number

his earlier ambition was animal, while "When you durst do it, then you were a man!" redefines manhood as willingness to kill. The exclamation and the repetition of "man" across the following lines suggest she is reshaping his identity through language itself.

The climax is her image of infanticide. She begins tenderly, "How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me", and the soft sounds and maternal intimacy make the shift into violence more shocking: she would have "plucked my nipple from his boneless gums, / And dashed the brains out!" The harsh plosives of "plucked" and "dashed" and the vulnerable detail of "boneless gums" create revulsion. She inverts the natural role of a mother to prove that an oath matters more than any bond, and her repeated "I" sets her own resolve against his weakness.

Finally, her tone changes. She mocks his "If we should fail" with the scornful echo "We fail?" and then shifts into the imperative "screw your courage to the sticking-place", an image of tightening a crossbow string that makes courage mechanical. The future tense "we'll not fail" and her detailed plan to ply the chamberlains "with wine and wassail" show her as a strategist. The inclusive "we" now replaces the accusing "you": once he is broken, she draws him back in as a partner. Shakespeare presents her as frighteningly persuasive, yet the extremity of her language may hint that she, too, must work hard to silence her own nature.

1b

Power in Macbeth is important because it is what everyone either holds, craves or fears, and Shakespeare shows that power seized unlawfully destroys the person who takes it. Across the play he contrasts the legitimate, God-given power of kingship with the unnatural power of the witches and the stolen power of Macbeth, reassuring a Jacobean audience that rightful order will always be

Question number

restored.

At the start, power is shown through Duncan's authority as king. He rewards loyalty by making Macbeth Thane of Cawdor, and he alone decides the succession when he names Malcolm Prince of Cumberland. Shakespeare presents his power as generous and natural, since Duncan speaks of planting Macbeth and making him grow. In 1606, when James I believed in the Divine Right of Kings, the audience would have seen a king's power as coming from God, so its effect is to make the later murder not just a crime but a sin against heaven. Yet Duncan's trust is also a weakness: he admits there is no art to find the mind's construction in the face, just before honouring the man who will kill him.

Power is also shown through the supernatural. The witches never force Macbeth to act, but their prophecy that he "shalt be king hereafter" has the power to awaken his "black and deep desires". Their effect is psychological: they plant an idea and let his ambition do the rest. For an audience living under a king who had written Daemonologie and supported witch trials, this would have made their influence seem genuinely dangerous, and the equivocation of their later prophecies shows how easily evil can manipulate those who want power.

Once Macbeth becomes king, Shakespeare shows that stolen power brings only fear. He feels that "to be thus is nothing" unless he is safely so, and his anxiety about Banquo's descendants leads him to hire murderers. Significantly, he now excludes his wife, telling her to "be innocent of the knowledge", so the balance of power seen in the extract is reversed. His reign becomes tyranny: the slaughter of Macduff's wife and children shows that power without legitimacy can only maintain itself through terror, and Scotland is described as suffering under him. The effect is that power isolates him completely.

Question number

Lady Macbeth's power, so strong in Act I, also collapses. In the sleepwalking scene she is reduced to fragmented prose, unable to wash away imagined blood, and her death offstage barely moves her husband. Shakespeare suggests that the power she gained by rejecting her femininity was unnatural, which would have confirmed the expectations of a patriarchal society about women who stepped outside their place.

Finally, power returns to its rightful owner. Macduff, whose authority comes from grief and justice, defeats Macbeth, and Malcolm restores order, calling Macbeth a "dead butcher" and his queen "fiend-like". The effect is to restore the Great Chain of Being. Shakespeare's message, perhaps written to flatter James after the Gunpowder Plot, is that power gained through regicide is self-destroying, while lawful power endures.

2a

In this extract Shakespeare presents Prospero as a loving but controlling father, a man whose tenderness towards Miranda is inseparable from his need to stage-manage every part of her future. He moves from apology, to proud generosity, to stern warning, and the shifts in his language suggest that even his kindness is a form of authority.

He begins in a surprisingly conciliatory tone. The conditional "If I have too austerely punished you" seems to admit fault, yet the "If" keeps the admission hypothetical, so he never quite apologises. He immediately reframes Ferdinand's hardships as deliberate: "All thy vexations / Were but my trials of thy love". The word "trials" presents him as a judge or examiner, and "but" minimises the suffering he caused, revealing that the log-carrying was a test he designed and

Question number

controlled from the start. Praising Ferdinand for having "strangely stood the test" positions Prospero as the one who grants approval.

His love for Miranda is expressed through possessive imagery. She is "a third of mine own life, / Or that for which I live", a phrase that shows deep devotion, since the correction suggests she is his whole reason for living. Yet the repeated first person pronouns, "I", "my", "mine", place Prospero at the centre of the gift. Miranda is described as something to "tender to thy hand", and "my rich gift" and "take my daughter" turn her into an object passed between men. The language of trade, "acquisition / Worthily purchased", makes marriage sound like a transaction he is concluding. His boast that she will "outstrip all praise, / And make it halt behind her" uses personification to show his pride, and the exclamation "O Ferdinand!" adds a rare warmth.

The tone shifts sharply with "But". Prospero's warning about breaking "her virgin-knot" before the "holy rite" reveals his anxiety about control and legitimacy. The ceremonial lexis, "sanctimonious ceremonies", "full and holy rite", shows how seriously he regards proper order. He then builds a curse through a list of personified abstractions: "barren hate, / Sour-eyed disdain and discord". The harsh sibilance and the image of the marriage bed strewn with "weeds so loathly" create a vision of a sterile, poisoned union that contrasts with the fertile "sweet aspersion" heaven might otherwise let fall. The imperative "take heed" makes the threat explicit. Prospero speaks almost like a magician casting a spell, which reminds the audience of his power over everyone on the island.

Structurally, Prospero has the long speeches while Ferdinand's replies are shorter and dutiful, and he even answers in the same elevated, mythological language, swearing by "Phoebus' steeds" that his honour will not "melt" into lust. Prospero's

Question number

closing "Fairly spoke" is brief and approving, the verdict of a master satisfied that his pupil has given the right answer. The final line, "Sit, then, and talk with her. She is thine own", sounds generous, yet it is phrased as a command, and even his permission is an order. Shakespeare therefore presents Prospero as a father whose love is sincere but who cannot stop directing the lives of others, a quality that defines him throughout the play.

2b

Obedience is central to The Tempest because Prospero's whole plan depends on others doing what they are told. Shakespeare shows obedience earned through love, obedience forced through fear and the dangerous consequences of disobedience, and in doing so he explores the hierarchies of master and servant, father and child, and ruler and subject that structured Jacobean society.

Obedience is first shown in Prospero's relationship with Miranda. In Act I Scene 2 he repeatedly demands her attention as he tells their history, and when he wants her out of the way he simply sends her to sleep. Miranda obeys without question, which reflects the expectation that a daughter in Shakespeare's time would submit to her father's authority. Yet her one act of disobedience, revealing her name to Ferdinand against her father's command, is driven by love, and its effect is to show that obedience cannot fully govern human feeling. Ironically, Prospero wants the match, so even her disobedience serves his plan.

Ariel's obedience is more complex. He serves willingly and brilliantly, creating the storm and later appearing as a harpy to condemn the "three men of sin". However, when he asks for his liberty, Prospero angrily reminds him of his imprisonment by Sycorax in a cloven pine and threatens to imprison him in an oak. Ariel's obedience is therefore bought with gratitude and maintained by fear. Its effect is positive in

Question number

the end: because he does exactly what he is told, Prospero's plan succeeds and Ariel is finally set free.

Caliban presents the opposite. He obeys only because Prospero's magic causes him physical pain, complaining that he must obey because Prospero's art is so strong. His disobedience takes the form of rebellion: he transfers his loyalty to Stephano, kneeling to a drunken butler and calling him a god. Shakespeare makes this comic, but the effect is to show how disobedience to a rightful master leads to chaos and humiliation, as the conspirators are hunted by spirit dogs. At a time when England was beginning to colonise the Americas, a modern audience may also read Caliban's resistance more sympathetically, as the reaction of a native whose island was taken from him.

The most serious disobedience is political. Antonio usurped his brother's dukedom with the help of Alonso, and on the island he tempts Sebastian to murder the sleeping Alonso. For an audience that believed in the Divine Right of Kings and the Great Chain of Being, plotting against a rightful ruler was a sin as well as a crime. By contrast, Gonzalo obeyed the order to put Prospero to sea but secretly supplied him with food and books, so Shakespeare suggests that the best obedience is tempered with conscience.

Finally, obedience leads to reconciliation. Ferdinand's patient obedience in carrying logs earns him Miranda, and Prospero himself, persuaded by Ariel to choose "virtue" over "vengeance", gives up his magic. In the epilogue he asks the audience to set him free, so the master who demanded obedience must now humbly depend on others. Shakespeare suggests that obedience matters, but that power must ultimately be surrendered with mercy.

Question number	
3a	In this extract Shakespeare presents Romeo as a passionate, impulsive young man whose emotions swing violently from joy to despair. The scene is built on a cruel reversal: Romeo begins lifted by a hopeful dream and ends, within moments, resolved on death, and Shakespeare uses dramatic irony, imagery and changes of pace to show a character ruled entirely by feeling. Romeo opens in a mood of rare happiness. The oxymoron "flattering truth of sleep" already hints at the unreliability of his optimism, since flattery is pleasing but false. He feels that "My bosom's lord sits lightly in his throne", a metaphor in which love is a king ruling his heart, and the adverb "lightly" suggests ease and contentment. The phrase "unaccustomed spirit" reminds the audience that joy is unusual for Romeo, and the image of being lifted "above the ground with cheerful thoughts" shows how his emotions physically transport him. Yet the audience, who knows Juliet is in the tomb, hears this happiness with painful dramatic irony. His dream is darkly prophetic. He dreamt that Juliet "came and found me dead" and "breathed such life with kisses in my lips" that he "revived and was an emperor". The imagery of death and resurrection anticipates the final scene, where Juliet will indeed find him dead and kiss his lips, but no life will return. His own interruption, "Strange dream, that gives a dead man leave to think!", shows a playful, reflective side, while the hyperbole of "emperor" shows how love elevates him. The exclamation "How sweet is love itself possessed" presents Romeo as an idealistic lover for whom even the "shadows" of love are "rich in joy". The arrival of Balthasar changes the pace. Romeo's rapid series of questions, "How doth my lady? Is my father well? / How fares my Juliet?", shows his eagerness, and the repetition of Juliet's name reveals where his thoughts truly lie. His line "nothing can be ill if she were well" is cruelly echoed by Balthasar's euphemism,

Question number

"she is well, and nothing can be ill", since she is "well" only in the sense of being at peace in heaven. Shakespeare uses this echo to show how quickly words of comfort turn into words of death.

Romeo's reaction is strikingly brief. "Is it e'en so?" is short and stunned, and his immediate cry "Then I defy you, stars!" shows him rebelling against fate, recalling the Prologue's "star-crossed lovers". Ironically, by defying the stars he rushes towards the very destiny they have set. His speech then becomes clipped and practical, a string of imperatives: "Get me ink and paper", "hire post-horses", "Get thee gone". The monosyllables and the decision "I will hence tonight" show his impulsiveness: he does not pause to grieve or question.

Balthasar's observation that his looks are "pale and wild" suggests a man barely in control, yet Romeo dismisses him with "Tush, thou art deceived", hiding his intentions. The repeated question about letters from the Friar adds tension, since the audience knows the message has failed. Shakespeare presents Romeo as a loving but reckless hero, whose speed of feeling, so moving in his romance, becomes the flaw that destroys him.

3b

Suffering is important in Romeo and Juliet because it is the price that a society built on hatred makes its young people pay. Shakespeare shows suffering through unrequited love, grief, banishment and family conflict, and its effect is to push the characters into ever more desperate decisions, so that suffering itself drives the tragedy towards the deaths that finally reconcile the two houses.

At the very beginning, suffering is shown through Romeo's lovesickness for Rosaline. He speaks in clichéd oxymorons such as "O brawling love, O loving hate"

Question number

and avoids daylight, shutting himself away. This suffering is partly comic, presented through the exaggerated conventions of Petrarchan poetry that Elizabethan audiences would have recognised, but its effect is important: it makes him go to the Capulet feast, where he meets Juliet. It also establishes that Romeo feels everything to extremes.

Suffering becomes real in Act 3 Scene 1. Mercutio, fatally wounded, curses "A plague o' both your houses!", and his bitterness shows that ordinary people suffer for a feud they did not create. Romeo's grief turns immediately into revenge, and after killing Tybalt he cries "O, I am fortune's fool!" The effect of this suffering is to transform a romantic comedy into tragedy, and Romeo's banishment follows. In the Friar's cell he weeps and throws himself on the ground, claiming that exile is worse than death, which shows how suffering overwhelms his reason.

Juliet's suffering is equally intense but more isolated. When she learns that Romeo has killed Tybalt, her conflicted reaction, calling him a "beautiful tyrant", reveals the pain of divided loyalties. Her greatest suffering comes from her family. Capulet's rage when she refuses Paris, threatening to let her "hang, beg, starve, die in the streets", shows that in a patriarchal society a daughter who disobeyed her father could be disowned. Even the Nurse abandons her by advising her to marry Paris. The effect is that Juliet, left alone, turns to the Friar's dangerous potion, showing that suffering forces her into reckless action. Her soliloquy before taking it, full of fears of waking in the vault among her ancestors' bones, shows her suffering as both emotional and imaginative.

The suffering of the parents is shown when they believe Juliet is dead. The Capulets' grief at her apparent death is presented through repetitive, almost formal lament, which may seem excessive to an audience who knows she lives, but it

Question number

foreshadows the real loss to come.

In the final scene, suffering reaches its climax. Romeo, believing Juliet dead, chooses to "shake the yoke of inauspicious stars", and Juliet wakes to find him dead and kills herself with his dagger. Lady Montague has already died of grief at Romeo's exile. The effect of all this suffering is that the families are finally reconciled, and the Prince declares "all are punished". In a society where honour and obedience were valued above individual desire, Shakespeare suggests that the suffering of the young is the consequence of their elders' hatred, and only through such extreme pain can that hatred finally end.

4a In this extract Shakespeare presents Claudio as a cruel, theatrical and deeply wounded young man who uses the ceremony of marriage to stage a public humiliation of Hero. His accusation is carefully planned, and the contrast between his controlled opening and his later outbursts suggests both calculated revenge and genuine pain at what he believes is betrayal.

Claudio begins with chilling politeness. His question to Leonato, "Will you with free and unconstrainèd soul / Give me this maid, your daughter?", mirrors the formal language of the wedding service, but the audience knows he means to reject her, so the dramatic irony makes his courtesy sinister. The word "maid" is loaded, since he believes she is no virgin. His follow up, asking what he can give back that "May counterpoise this rich and precious gift", sets a trap. The commercial language of weighing and balancing shows that Claudio sees Hero as a valuable possession, and Don Pedro's reply, "unless you render her again", allows Claudio to spring it.

The tone then turns violently. The imperative "There, Leonato, take her back again"

Question number

is abrupt, and the metaphor "Give not this rotten orange to your friend" is shocking in its contempt. An orange is sweet on the outside but may be decayed within, so the image suggests that Hero's beauty conceals corruption. There may also be a pun on Seville oranges and Don John's Spanish origins, reminding the audience of the deceiver behind the scene. The antithesis in "the sign and semblance of her honour" shows Claudio's obsession with the gap between appearance and reality, a key concern of the play.

He then becomes almost a prosecutor addressing a jury. The ironic exclamation "Behold how like a maid she blushes here!" and the rhetorical questions "Would you not swear, / All you that see her, that she were a maid" draw the whole congregation into judging her. He interprets her blush, a natural sign of innocence, as "guiltiness, not modesty", and the balanced antithesis makes his false reading sound logical and final. The personification of "cunning sin" that can "cover itself" reveals his belief that women are naturally deceitful. The phrase "the heat of a luxurious bed" uses sensual imagery to shame Hero in public, and his description of her as "an approvèd wanton" is brutally direct.

Claudio's short, broken reply to Leonato, "Not to be married", shows his resolve, and the metaphor "knit my soul" reveals that he once saw marriage as a spiritual union, which makes his sense of betrayal sharper. When Leonato suggests Claudio himself may have slept with her, Claudio interrupts, "I know what you would say", showing his need to control the narrative. He insists he behaved "as a brother to his sister", with "Bashful sincerity and comely love". The gentle alliteration and soft adjectives present himself as pure, in contrast to the corrupt Hero.

Overall, Shakespeare presents Claudio as self-righteous and concerned above all with his own honour. His rhetoric is powerful, yet the audience's knowledge of Don

Question number

John's trick exposes his judgement as shallow, and his readiness to destroy Hero publicly makes him one of the most troubling romantic heroes in Shakespeare.

4b

Tricking others is the engine of Much Ado About Nothing. Almost every major event is caused by a deception, and Shakespeare uses this to explore how easily people believe what they see and hear. Crucially, he shows that tricks can be used for love or for malice, so the effect of deception depends on the intention behind it, and the title's pun on "noting", meaning overhearing, points to how central eavesdropping and misreading are.

The first trick is Don Pedro's plan to woo Hero on Claudio's behalf at the masked ball. The masks allow characters to say what they would not say openly, and Beatrice takes the chance to insult Benedick, calling him the Prince's jester. Yet this deception immediately goes wrong when Don John tells Claudio that Don Pedro is wooing Hero for himself. Claudio's quick belief, and his bitter claim that friendship is constant in all things except love, shows how fragile trust is, and foreshadows his later readiness to believe the worst.

The gulling of Benedick and Beatrice shows trickery used kindly. In Act 2 Scene 3, Don Pedro, Claudio and Leonato stage a conversation for Benedick to overhear, claiming that Beatrice is dying of love for him. The comedy comes from dramatic irony, as the audience watches him hide in the arbour and react. His soliloquy afterwards, in which he decides "I will be horribly in love with her", shows the trick's effect: it exposes the feelings already hidden beneath his wit. Hero and Ursula's similar trick on Beatrice makes her speak in verse for the first time, a sign of her sincerity. These benevolent deceptions bring together the play's most equal couple.

Question number

Don John's trick shows deception at its most destructive. Through Borachio, he arranges for Claudio and Don Pedro to watch Margaret, dressed in Hero's clothes, at Hero's window. Don John is presented as a self-declared villain, a "plain-dealing villain" who resents his illegitimate status, and his trick exploits the obsession with female chastity in a patriarchal society where a woman's value depended on her virginity. The effect is catastrophic: Hero is shamed at the altar and Leonato even wishes her dead.

In response, the Friar devises a counter-trick, pretending Hero has died so that Claudio will regret his accusation. This shows deception used to heal rather than harm, and its effect is to test Claudio's repentance. Ironically, the truth is uncovered not by the clever aristocrats but by Dogberry's bumbling Watch, whose malapropisms create comedy even as they reveal the plot. Shakespeare suggests that those who think themselves wise are the most easily deceived.

The final trick is the second wedding, where Claudio agrees to marry Leonato's "niece" without seeing her face, which turns out to be Hero. To a modern audience this may seem troubling, as Hero is treated as a reward to be exchanged, but for an Elizabethan audience it would complete the comic structure of the play. Even Benedick and Beatrice are finally exposed by their own love sonnets. Overall, Shakespeare presents tricking others as important because it reveals truth as well as hiding it: love grows through kind deceptions, while cruel deception shows how dangerous appearances can be.

Sa

In this extract Shakespeare presents Sebastian as a bewildered but rational young man who struggles to reconcile his extraordinary good fortune with his sense of

Question number

reason. His soliloquy is a dramatised argument with himself, and the movement from wonder to doubt to calm acceptance shows him to be thoughtful, grounded and, finally, decisive.

Sebastian begins by anchoring himself in physical reality. The deictic phrases "This is the air; that is the glorious sun" and the senses in "I do feel 't and see 't" show him clinging to what he can touch and see. The repeated demonstratives and the end-stopped clauses create a slow, deliberate rhythm, as though he is reassuring himself step by step. The "pearl" Olivia has given him is a concrete symbol of wealth and love, proof that the dream is real. His conclusion, "Yet 't is not madness", shows his determination to stay rational, and the word "madness", which echoes throughout the play, places him within the confusion created by the twins' identities.

He then turns to Antonio, showing his loyalty and dependence. The question "Where's Antonio then?" and the hope that his "counsel" might do him "golden service" suggest he values his friend's guidance, and the metaphor "golden" links advice to treasure. The audience knows Antonio has been arrested, so the dramatic irony adds poignancy to Sebastian's search.

The central section of the soliloquy dramatises a conflict between "soul" and "sense", personified as disputing with each other. The legal and intellectual lexis, "disputes", "discourse", "wrangle with my reason", presents Sebastian's mind as a courtroom where evidence is weighed. The metaphor "flood of fortune" suggests something overwhelming and unstoppable, and the long sentence that runs across many lines, packed with clauses, mirrors his racing thoughts. He considers that either "I am mad / Or else the lady's mad", and the antithesis captures his confusion.

Question number

However, he reasons his way out through observation. Olivia, he notes, could not "sway her house, command her followers" with such "smooth, discreet, and stable bearing" if she were mad. The list of verbs shows his admiration of her authority, and the triplet of adjectives emphasises her composure. This suggests that Sebastian is perceptive and practical. His recognition that there is "something in 't / That is deceivable" shows that he senses the mistaken identity even if he cannot explain it.

Olivia's entrance changes the dynamic. She speaks urgently, asking him to "Plight me the full assurance of your faith" in the chapel, and refers to her "most jealous and too doubtful soul". Sebastian, who has spent the soliloquy doubting, responds with simple certainty: "I'll follow this good man, and go with you". His final rhyming couplet, "And, having sworn truth, ever will be true", gives the scene a sense of closure and suggests honesty and constancy. The repetition of "true" emphasises his integrity. Shakespeare therefore presents Sebastian as a man who embraces fortune with wonder and good sense, and whose readiness to commit himself contrasts with the self-deception of characters such as Orsino and Malvolio.

Sb

Social position is important in Twelfth Night because it shapes who may love whom, who may speak freely and who is laughed at. Shakespeare shows a rigid hierarchy of dukes, countesses, knights, servants and fools, yet the play's festive spirit allows that hierarchy to be tested, mocked and, briefly, turned upside down. Its effect is to reward characters who accept their place with grace and to punish those who over-reach.

Question number

Social position is first shown through Viola. Shipwrecked in Illyria, she disguises herself as Cesario and enters Orsino's service, lowering her status as well as hiding her gender. Her position as a servant means she cannot reveal her love for Orsino, and she can only hint at it through the story of a sister who "never told her love". The effect is painful dramatic irony. When Olivia falls for Cesario, she worries about his rank, and Viola's answer that her parentage is above her fortunes, and that she is a gentleman, is what makes the attraction acceptable. Social position therefore controls even desire.

Malvolio shows the dangers of social ambition. As Olivia's steward he is a servant, yet he dreams of becoming "Count Malvolio" and imagines commanding Sir Toby. The forged letter exploits this through the line "some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em". Its effect is humiliation: in yellow stockings and cross-garters he appears mad, and he is locked in a dark room. In Elizabethan England, where the hierarchy was seen as ordained by God, an audience would laugh at a servant aspiring to marry his mistress. However, his final cry, "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you", may unsettle us, suggesting that the cruelty of those above him has gone too far.

The comic subplot also shows how status is abused. Sir Toby, Olivia's uncle, uses his rank to live off her and to drain Sir Andrew's money with false promises that Andrew can win Olivia. Andrew's foolishness shows that a title does not guarantee worth. By contrast, Maria, a gentlewoman, rises through her wit and marries Sir Toby, suggesting that intelligence can sometimes overcome rank.

Feste occupies a special position. As a licensed fool he may mock his superiors, proving Olivia a fool for mourning her brother, and he observes that foolery shines everywhere like the sun. His low status gives him freedom, and Viola notes that

Question number

playing the fool requires wisdom. This reflects the festival of Twelfth Night itself, when servants and masters traditionally swapped roles, a reversal the play embodies.

Finally, social order is restored through marriage. Olivia marries Sebastian, a gentleman of good birth, and Orsino, seeing Viola as a woman, promises she will be his "mistress" and his "fancy's queen". The effect is that the lovers are matched in rank and the hierarchy is confirmed. Only Malvolio, who wished to rise above his station, and Antonio, an outsider, are left unpaired. Shakespeare suggests that social position can be playfully disturbed, but in the end it decides who belongs in the harmonious conclusion.

6a

In this extract Shakespeare presents Shylock as a man who has long endured humiliation and now relishes a reversal of power. His speech is bitter, sarcastic and carefully controlled, exposing Antonio's hypocrisy while hinting at the resentment that will drive the bond. Shylock emerges as both a victim of prejudice and a dangerous opponent.

He opens with formal address, "Signior Antonio", but immediately turns politeness into accusation. The phrase "many a time and oft" uses repetition to stress how frequently he has been abused, and the verb "rated" shows Antonio scolding him in public "In the Rialto", the heart of Venetian commerce. Shylock presents himself as patient: "Still have I borne it with a patient shrug". The image of the "shrug" is understated and weary, and his claim that "sufferance is the badge of all our tribe" suggests that endurance has become part of Jewish identity. The metaphor of a "badge" may also recall the marks Jews were forced to wear in Venice, so his suffering is both personal and collective.

Question number

He then lists the insults he has received, quoting Antonio's own words: "misbeliever, cut-throat dog". The animal imagery dehumanises him, and the physical details, spitting on his "Jewish gaberdine" and on his "beard", make the abuse vivid and degrading. The verbs "spit", "void your rheum" and "foot me" are deliberately ugly, forcing Antonio and the audience to confront what has been done. Shylock's insistence that this was "all for use of that which is mine own" presents him as wronged simply for practising his trade.

The turning point is "Well then, it now appears you need my help." The short, plain sentence marks a shift in power. Shylock now mimics Antonio's request, "Shylock, we would have moneys", and his use of reported speech becomes a form of mockery. His sarcastic rhetorical questions, "Hath a dog money? Is it possible / A cur can lend three thousand ducats?", turn Antonio's insult back on him, exposing the absurdity of despising a man whose help you then seek. The dashes and broken syntax create the effect of a man barely containing his anger.

His imagined humble reply is the most biting moment. He pictures himself speaking "in a bondman's key, / With bated breath and whisp'ring humbleness", and the soft alliteration of "bated breath" mimics the servility Antonio expects. The mock speech, "Fair sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last", lists his injuries with ironic courtesy, and the phrase "for these courtesies" is pure sarcasm. Shylock reveals himself as witty and articulate, more than a match for the Christians.

Antonio's harsh reply, promising to "spit on thee again", confirms Shylock's accusations. Shylock's response is suddenly gentle: "I would be friends with you, and have your love". This offer to take "no doit / Of usance" seems generous, yet the audience may suspect it is a strategy, as the "merry" bond with its pound of

Question number

flesh follows. The phrase "the shames that you have stained me with" reveals how deeply his hurt runs. Shakespeare therefore presents Shylock as a complex figure: wronged, eloquent and sympathetic, but also calculating, his apparent friendship masking a desire for revenge.

6b

Friendship is important in The Merchant of Venice because it is both the play's highest ideal and the source of its greatest danger. Shakespeare presents the self-sacrificing friendship of Antonio and Bassanio as noble, yet he also shows that friendship in Venice is exclusive: it binds Christians together while shutting out Shylock, and it eventually competes with marriage itself.

Friendship is shown most clearly between Antonio and Bassanio. In the opening scene Antonio is mysteriously sad, and his melancholy seems connected to Bassanio's plan to court Portia. When Bassanio asks for money, Antonio's reply is unconditional: "My purse, my person, my extremest means / Lie all unlocked to your occasions." The list moves from wealth to his own body, foreshadowing the pound of flesh, and the image of being "unlocked" suggests total openness. In the Renaissance, intense male friendship was often idealised as purer than romantic love, and Antonio embodies this ideal. Its effect is to set the plot in motion, since it is for Bassanio that he signs Shylock's bond.

Friendship is tested by the bond. When Antonio's ships are lost, his letter to Bassanio releases him from any debt and asks only to see him before he dies, which shows love without obligation. Bassanio's reaction in the trial reveals how deeply he values this friendship: he declares that his life, his wife and all the world are not esteemed above Antonio's life, and he would sacrifice them all to save him. Ironically, Portia, disguised as Balthazar, hears this and remarks drily

Question number

that his wife would not thank him for the offer. The effect is comic, but it also exposes a tension between friendship and marriage.

This tension drives the ring plot. Bassanio swore never to part with Portia's ring, yet when the disguised lawyer asks for it, Antonio persuades him to give it up, urging that his own love and deserving should be valued above Portia's command. Bassanio's choice shows the power of male friendship, but Portia's later mock anger teaches him that his first loyalty must now be to his wife. Antonio, offering to bind his soul for Bassanio's faithfulness, is gently absorbed into the marriage, though he is left without a partner at the end, which some audiences read as quietly sad.

Friendship is also shown between other characters. Portia and Nerissa share a close, witty bond, mirroring their husbands' friendship, while Gratiano's loyalty to Bassanio leads him to follow him to Belmont and marry Nerissa. Lorenzo and his friends help Jessica escape her father's house, which shows friendship as a Christian community that welcomes converts.

By contrast, Shylock is excluded from friendship. His only companion is Tubal, who brings news of both Antonio's losses and Jessica's spending. In the extract he claims "I would be friends with you", but Antonio's insults reveal that true friendship across religious lines is impossible in a society where Jews were marginalised and moneylending was condemned. For an Elizabethan audience, living in a country from which Jews had been expelled, this exclusion may have seemed natural, but a modern audience may see it as the play's tragedy. Shakespeare therefore presents friendship as powerful and generous, yet limited to those who belong.

Question number

7

Mystery is the engine of An Inspector Calls, but Priestley uses it for something larger than suspense. On the surface the play is a detective story in which a crime is gradually uncovered; underneath, the real mystery is moral. The audience is never told for certain who the Inspector is or whether Eva Smith was one girl or many, and this uncertainty is deliberate. By refusing to solve the puzzle neatly, Priestley shifts attention away from the question of who is guilty in a legal sense and towards the question of how each of us is responsible for others, a message he wanted a 1945 audience to carry out of the theatre into the building of a new society.

Priestley borrows the shape of the popular whodunit, with a single setting, a closed circle of suspects and an investigator who questions them "one person and one line of inquiry at a time". Audiences in the 1940s were used to the detective fiction of writers such as Agatha Christie, and they would have expected the mystery to end in an arrest. Priestley exploits this expectation. Each act ends on a cliffhanger, such as the Inspector's quiet question to Gerald or Mrs Birling's dawning horror about her son, so that the audience is pulled forward by curiosity. Yet the revelations do not narrow the guilt to one person; they widen it, until Eric can declare that "we all helped to kill her". The form of the mystery therefore enacts Priestley's socialist argument: the crime has no single culprit because it was produced by a whole class and a whole system.

The greatest mystery is the Inspector himself. Sheila's comment that "he never seemed like an ordinary police inspector" voices what the audience has sensed from his first entrance, when the stage directions describe "an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness". His arrival is precisely timed: Birling has just lectured the young men that "a man has to make his own way, has to look after himself", dismissing "community and all that nonsense", when "the sharp ring

Question number

of a front door bell" interrupts him. It is as if the Inspector has been summoned by Birling's selfishness. His name, Goole, echoes "ghoul", hinting at something supernatural, and he seems to know events before they are confessed, telling Mrs Birling exactly what she will discover. Some readings see him as a ghost, others as conscience made flesh, others as Priestley's own mouthpiece. The mystery is valuable precisely because it is never resolved: whatever he is, his authority does not come from the police but from moral truth.

Priestley also makes Eva Smith herself a mystery. The photograph is shown to one character at a time, so that, as Gerald later points out, there is no proof it was the same photograph. The Inspector mentions a letter and "a sort of diary", but neither is ever produced. This uncertainty might seem to weaken the case against the Birlings, and Gerald and Mr Birling seize on it gratefully. However, Priestley turns it into the heart of his message. If Eva may be "four or five different girls", then she stands for the countless young working women of 1912 who were sacked for asking for higher wages, dismissed on a customer's whim, used and discarded by wealthy men, and refused charity. The Inspector's final speech makes this explicit when he warns of "millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths". The blurring of her identity transforms an individual tragedy into a portrait of a whole exploited class, at a time before the welfare state, when a girl in her position had nowhere to turn.

The way characters respond to the mystery becomes a test of their morality. In Act Three, when Gerald returns with the news that "that man wasn't a police officer" and a phone call confirms there has been no suicide, the older generation treat the solved puzzle as an escape. Birling is relieved and jovial, and Gerald even offers Sheila the ring again, as though nothing has happened. For them, guilt depends on being caught. Sheila and Eric, by contrast, understand that the

Question number

mystery of the Inspector's identity changes nothing about what they did. Sheila says it "frightens" her the way her parents talk, and she repeats the Inspector's warning about "fire and blood and anguish". Priestley invites the audience to side with the young, who see that conscience does not need a police badge.

Finally, Priestley reopens the mystery at the moment it seems closed. The telephone rings and Birling announces that a girl has just died on her way to the Infirmary and that a police inspector is on his way to ask questions. The curtain falls on the family staring "guiltily and dumbfounded". This circular ending, which may reflect Priestley's interest in theories of time, suggests that the family will be made to relive the evening until they learn its lesson. For an audience in 1945, who had already lived through the "fire and blood and anguish" of two world wars that the Inspector predicts, the unresolved ending was a challenge: they had been given a second chance, and the Labour victory and the promise of a fairer post-war Britain offered a way to take it.

In conclusion, mystery is significant because it draws the audience in through the pleasures of a thriller and then denies them the comfort of a solution. By leaving the Inspector's identity and Eva's existence open, Priestley ensures that the only certain thing in the play is the moral one: that "we are members of one body" and that responsibility for others cannot be escaped.

8 In An Inspector Calls, Priestley places his hope in the younger generation. Sheila and Eric begin the play as spoilt, immature products of their privileged upbringing, yet they are the only characters who are genuinely changed by the Inspector's visit. By contrasting their growing sense of responsibility with the stubbornness of their parents, Priestley suggests that the future of society depends on the young,

Question number

a message aimed directly at the post-war audience of 1945, many of whom had just voted for a new, more equal Britain.

The short exchange in which Sheila calls Eric "squiffy" shows the generational divide from the opening scene. Mrs Birling's shocked reaction, "What an expression, Sheila! Really the things you girls pick up these days!", reveals her obsession with propriety and her fear of change. The phrase "you girls" dismisses Sheila as part of a modern, slightly vulgar category, and the exclamations make Mrs Birling sound comically rigid. Priestley uses this small moment of slang to suggest that the young already speak a different language from their parents. It is a light comic touch, but it foreshadows the deeper split that the Inspector will open between the generations.

At the start, however, the young are hardly admirable. Sheila is described as "very pleased with life" and her question to Gerald about the ring, "Is it the one you wanted me to have?", suggests she is used to deferring to men and to being given things. Eric is "half shy, half assertive", laughs awkwardly and drinks too much. Priestley presents them as children of the Edwardian upper middle class, sheltered by money and indifferent to the people whose labour pays for their comfort. This makes their later transformation more powerful, because it shows that privilege does not have to determine character.

Sheila changes first and most completely. When she hears what happened to Eva at Birling's factory, she instinctively protests, "But these girls aren't cheap labour, they're people." This is a radical statement in 1912, when workers were seen as an expendable resource, and it shows Sheila beginning to see past class. Her own confession, that she had Eva sacked from Milwards out of jealousy, is painful, yet she accepts her guilt honestly: "I know I'm to blame, and I'm desperately sorry".

Question number

Crucially, she grows perceptive. She warns her mother not to "build up a kind of wall between us and that girl", and she sees that the Inspector is giving Mrs Birling the rope to hang herself. The Inspector observes that "we often do on the young ones. They're more impressionable", and Priestley presents this impressionability as a virtue: the young can still learn.

Eric's development is darker but equally important. He sympathises with the strikers early on, asking why they shouldn't try for higher wages, which shows an instinctive fairness his father lacks. However, his treatment of Eva, forcing himself on her when drunk and stealing money from the office, exposes how young men of his class exploited working-class women with little fear of consequences. What redeems Eric is his refusal to hide. He turns on his parents with bitter accusations, telling his father he is "not the kind of father a chap could go to" and accusing his mother: "You killed her." The breakdown of family authority here is shocking for an Edwardian household, but Priestley encourages us to see it as necessary. Eric's insistence that "we all helped to kill her" is the clearest statement of collective responsibility from any member of the family.

Priestley's structure makes the final act a test which divides the generations completely. Once Gerald discovers that the Inspector was not a real officer, Mr and Mrs Birling celebrate and mock "the famous younger generation who know it all". Their concern was always reputation; Birling earlier admits he would "give thousands" to undo the damage, but only to avoid scandal. Sheila and Eric refuse to return to normal. Sheila repeats the Inspector's warning about "fire and blood and anguish" and says it "frightens" her the way her parents talk. Her refusal to take back the ring immediately when Gerald offers it shows a new independence, echoing the women of her era who, through the suffrage movement, were beginning to question the roles assigned to them. Gerald, older and more like

Question number

Birling, is significant because he sits between the generations and, in the end, chooses the side of the parents, proving that youth alone is not enough: what matters is a willingness to change.

The context of the play's first performance gives the younger generation its full importance. Set in 1912, the play allows the audience to know what Birling does not: that the "unsinkable" Titanic would sink and that war was coming. The young of 1912 would be the generation who fought in the First World War. Writing in 1945, after a second war, Priestley was addressing the young voters and returning servicemen who had helped elect a Labour government committed to the welfare state. Sheila and Eric are models for them, showing that the old capitalist individualism of men like Birling could be rejected.

In conclusion, the younger generation are important because they carry Priestley's message beyond the end of the play. Their parents are fixed and unteachable, but Sheila and Eric prove that people can grow from guilt into responsibility. Priestley suggests that if the future is to avoid "fire and blood and anguish", it will be because the young have learned that "we are responsible for each other".

9 The relationship between Maggie and Hobson is the backbone of Hobson's Choice, and Brighouse uses it to stage a comic battle for power. At the start Hobson believes he is the unquestioned master of his house and his shop, while in reality it is Maggie who runs both. Over the course of the play the hidden truth becomes the visible one: the bullying father is gradually humbled and the undervalued daughter takes control. Written in 1915, when the suffrage movement was challenging assumptions about women, but set in 1880, the play uses this father and daughter to question the Victorian belief that men should rule the family.

Question number

From the opening act, Hobson asserts an authority he does not truly possess. His warning, "I'm warning you your conduct towards your parent's got to change", is a pompous, formal threat, and the stiff phrase "your parent" makes him sound as though he is reading from a rule book of fatherhood. Yet Maggie is quietly in charge. When Hobson tries to slip off to the Moonraker's, she reminds him "One o'clock dinner, father", and the brisk instruction, softened only by the respectful "father", shows that she manages his time just as she manages the shop. In a patriarchal society the father was regarded as head of the household, but Brighouse shows that, after the death of his wife, Hobson depends entirely on Maggie to act as housekeeper, manager and substitute mother to her sisters. The comedy lies in the gap between his bluster and his helplessness.

Hobson's view of Maggie is shaped by money and convenience rather than love. He complains about the cost of dressing his daughters, resenting what he pays the draper, and he refuses to pay them for their work, scoffing at the very idea of wages for his own daughters. When Maggie asks pointedly "How much a week do you give us?", she exposes his meanness and her own understanding of her value. Most cruelly, Hobson dismisses her as being "past the marrying age", seeing her as too useful to lose and too old to be worth a husband. At thirty, Maggie is treated as a permanent unpaid servant, which reflects the limited choices for unmarried middle-class women in the 1880s, who had little independent income and few rights.

The turning point comes when Maggie announces that she is "going to marry Willie". Hobson's horror reveals his snobbery and his fear of public opinion: Willie is a "workhouse brat" and the marriage would make him the "laughing stock" of Salford. For Hobson, a "respectable ratepayer", status matters more than his

Question number

daughter's happiness. Maggie's defiance is extraordinary for her time. She chooses her own husband, proposes to him herself and refuses to let her father decide her future. When Hobson tries to beat Willie with his belt, it is Maggie's encouragement that gives Willie the courage to stand up to him, and the couple leave together. The relationship breaks down completely, and Hobson stays away from the wedding, admitting only that he is "none proud" of the match.

Brighouse then shows Maggie outwitting her father on his own ground of money. After Hobson falls drunk into Beenstock's cellar, Maggie uses the incident to arrange settlements for Vickey and Alice so that they too can marry. Her firm repetition in "You can afford five hundred pounds and you're going to pay five hundred pounds" reverses their roles: now the daughter lays down the law and the father must obey. Hobson's bitter claim that he drinks to forget he has "a thankless child" is ironic, since it is his drinking, not Maggie's ingratitude, that causes his troubles. This links to the context of the Temperance Movement, which campaigned against the damage alcohol did to families and businesses; Hobson's decline is a warning about drink as much as about pride.

In the final act, the relationship is transformed. Weakened by alcoholism, Hobson is told by his doctor to "get Maggie back. At any price", and he is forced to admit how much he needs her: "by gum, I want you now". The dialect exclamation sounds raw and sincere, a rare moment when Hobson drops his pomposity. It is significant that Maggie is the only daughter willing to come back; Alice and Vickey are too concerned with their new respectable lives. Maggie shows compassion, but she returns on her own terms, with Willie as a partner and the business renamed with Willie's name first. Her loyalty is real, but it is no longer the loyalty of a servant.

Question number

Ultimately, Brighouse presents the relationship as a reversal of power that is both comic and serious. Hobson begins the play as a domestic tyrant and ends it dependent on the daughter he belittled. The title itself, meaning a choice that is no choice at all, applies to Hobson by the end: he must accept Maggie's terms or be ruined. For an audience in 1915, as women were proving their capability in the wartime workforce and demanding the vote, Maggie's victory over her father would have seemed a sharp and timely argument that women's intelligence and practical skill deserved recognition and respect.

10 Money runs through every relationship in Hobson's Choice. Brighouse uses it to define social status, to expose Hobson's meanness and hypocrisy, and, most importantly, to show how power shifts from father to daughter. In a play set in 1880s Salford, a world of shopkeepers, merchants and solicitors where respectability was measured in income, the characters who understand money are the ones who gain control of their lives, and Maggie's business sense becomes the means of her independence.

At the start of the play, money marks Hobson out as a man of standing. His boot shop serves good-class customers, the "carriage folk", and its "dingy but business-like" appearance suggests that he is comfortable enough to see no need to invest in it. Hobson is fiercely proud of his position as "a respectable ratepayer", and this phrase shows how closely Victorian middle-class identity was tied to property and the payment of rates. Yet Brighouse quickly reveals the weakness behind the image. The shop's success depends on Willie's skill at the bench and Maggie's skill behind the counter, while Hobson spends his afternoons drinking at the Moonraker's. The money is his, but the work is theirs.

Question number

Hobson's attitude to money exposes him as a tight-fisted father. He resents what he spends on his daughters' clothes, sneering that the younger girls look like "French Madams", and he complains about the draper's bills. When Maggie raises the question of pay, he is incredulous: "Wages? Do you think I pay wages to my own daughters?" The rhetorical question shows that he sees their labour as something he is owed, not something he must reward. This reflects the late Victorian assumption that daughters belonged to the household until they married and that their work had no cash value. Brighouse invites the audience to laugh at Hobson's meanness but also to recognise its injustice.

Marriage in the play is also a financial transaction. Hobson declares that he will choose husbands for his daughters, but he changes his mind as soon as he realises that suitors will expect a settlement, complaining that he would have to "bait [his] hook to catch fish". For middle-class families of the period, a dowry was an expected part of a good match, and marrying a prosperous man was the main way for a woman to secure her future. Hobson's refusal to pay shows that he values his money more than his daughters' happiness. Ironically, his meanness is exactly what Maggie later exploits.

The key moment comes after Hobson falls drunk into the cellar of Beenstock's corn warehouse. Maggie, with the help of Albert Prosser the solicitor and Freddy Beenstock, arranges for Hobson to be sued for trespass, then persuades him to settle out of court to avoid his name appearing in the papers. Her insistence, "You can afford five hundred pounds and you're going to pay five hundred pounds", is forceful and blunt, the repetition of the sum showing that she will not bargain. Hobson's terror of public disgrace, which he sees as "ruin and disaster" for a man whose trade depends on respectable customers, is turned against him. Maggie uses the money to give Vickey and Alice their settlements, "half of five hundred apiece",

Question number

so that they can marry Freddy and Albert. Money therefore becomes the tool through which Maggie liberates her sisters and defeats her father.

For Maggie and Willie, money represents opportunity and self-respect. Willie, who earns only eighteen shillings a week, has no prospects until Maggie sees the value of his talent. Her proposal is essentially a business plan: "My brain and your hands" will make a partnership. With a loan of a hundred pounds from Mrs Hepworth of Hope Hall, who recognises Willie's boots as the best made, they open their own shop in Oldfield Road. Maggie's thrift is shown in small details, such as the cheap brass wedding ring she buys rather than a gold one, but her ambition is large. Within a year they have repaid the loan and "made a bit o' brass", proving that hard work and intelligence, not inherited status, create wealth. This would have appealed to the values of a Lancashire audience proud of self-made success.

By the final act, the financial positions are reversed. Hobson's drinking has damaged both his health and his trade, and the shop is failing, as the business has followed Maggie and Willie to Oldfield Road. Brighouse links Hobson's alcoholism to his economic ruin, echoing the warnings of the Temperance Movement about drink destroying families and livelihoods. When Willie and Maggie agree to return, it is on their terms: a partnership in which Willie's name comes first and they will "make some alterations" to the business. The man who once refused to pay his daughters is now dependent on them.

In conclusion, money is important because it measures power in the play. Hobson uses it to control and belittle, while Maggie uses it to free herself and others. Brighouse, writing in 1915 as women were demanding greater rights, suggests that financial independence was the key to women's freedom, and Maggie's triumph is above all the triumph of someone who understands the value of money better than

Question number

the man who thought it was his alone.

11 The Narrator is one of the most significant figures in Blood Brothers because he controls how the audience experiences the story. He opens and closes the play, comments on the action, plays minor roles and haunts the edges of scenes as a reminder of the tragedy to come. Through him, Russell turns a story about two twins in Liverpool into a wider argument about fate, responsibility and class, and he uses the Narrator to challenge his 1980s audience to decide who, or what, is to blame.

The Narrator's opening words are immediately significant. "So did y' hear the story of the Johnstone twins? / As like each other as two new pins" sounds like the start of a ballad or a piece of local gossip, drawing the audience in with a conversational question and the colloquial "y'". The rhyming couplets and simple simile give the story the quality of a folk tale, something passed from person to person. Yet this tale begins at its end: the twins' bodies are already on stage. Like the Chorus in a Greek tragedy, the Narrator tells us the outcome before the story starts, so the audience watches not to discover what happens but to understand why. This creates dramatic irony that colours every scene of childhood fun.

Russell also uses the Narrator to present, and then question, public judgement. In the prologue he describes Mrs Johnstone as "the mother, so cruel, / There's a stone in place of her heart", the harsh metaphor reflecting the way communities and newspapers condemn women like her. Yet he immediately invites the audience to "judge for yourselves", and the play that follows shows a loving, struggling mother deserted by her husband and burdened by debt. The Narrator's shifting stance makes the audience aware of how quickly people pass judgement on the

Question number

poor, an important point in a decade when working-class communities were often blamed for their own hardship.

Throughout the play the Narrator is a figure of menace and inevitability. His recurring song, with its catalogue of superstitions beginning with shoes upon the table, reminds Mrs Johnstone that "the devil's got your number". The repetition of this refrain at key moments, such as after Mrs Johnstone gives away Edward or when the twins become friends, makes fate feel like a debt collector who will eventually call. In this sense, the Narrator is almost diabolical, lurking in the background as a threat. At other moments he seems godlike, knowing everything and foreseeing everything. Russell's stage directions often place him silently watching, so that even in light-hearted scenes the audience cannot forget the ending. As the tension builds towards the climax, his warning that "there's a man gone mad in the town tonight" adds urgency and dread.

The Narrator's role-play is another way Russell reveals the society surrounding the Johnstones. Appearing as the Milkman demanding payment, he shows the constant pressure of debt in Mrs Johnstone's life, and his blunt comment that she shouldn't have signed for the "bloody stuff" captures the harsh, unsympathetic voice of those who profit from the poor. As the Gynaecologist, he delivers the news "You're expecting twins", the moment that sets the tragedy in motion. By having the Narrator play these figures, Russell suggests that the outside world itself is part of the trap closing around the family. His changing accent, at times broad Scouse like the Johnstones and at times standard and authoritative like the Lyons, also allows him to move between the two social worlds. Like Russell himself, who grew up working class in Liverpool and later moved into a more educated, middle-class world, the Narrator belongs fully to neither.

Question number

The Narrator is also important as a Brechtian device. Because he speaks directly to the audience, he stops us from losing ourselves entirely in the emotion of the story and pushes us to think critically about its causes. This matters because Russell's purpose is political. Written in 1983, during a period of mass unemployment in Liverpool under Thatcher's government, the play shows how Mickey loses his job, turns to crime and depression, while Edward's education and wealth protect him. The Narrator's presence encourages the audience to see these outcomes not as personal failings but as the product of an unequal society.

His final speech is the most significant moment of all. He asks whether we should "blame superstition" for the deaths, or whether it could be "what we, the English, have come to know as class". The question form keeps the audience actively involved, and the delayed word "class" lands with the weight of a verdict. Mrs Lyons's invented superstition, that the twins would die if they learned the truth, comes horribly true, but the Narrator suggests that the real force separating the brothers is the social divide between them. By including the audience in "we, the English", he makes them complicit.

In conclusion, the Narrator is significant because he frames and interprets the whole play. He creates tension and inevitability, exposes society's harsh judgements and finally redirects the audience from superstition to class. Russell uses him to make sure that the audience leaves not only moved by the deaths of the twins but questioning the society that made those deaths possible.

12

Violence in Blood Brothers grows steadily from playground games to real deaths, and Russell uses this escalation to show how poverty, frustration and inequality can turn innocence into tragedy. The violence is never presented as glamorous.

Question number

Instead, it is a symptom of a society that offers some people, especially working-class young men like Mickey and Sammy, very few other ways to express power or anger. By the final scene, the games the twins played as children have become horrifyingly real.

Russell introduces violence through play. When we first meet Mickey at seven, he is "carrying a toy gun", and in their war game the boys claim to have "wiped out three thousand Indians". The children's games of "cops and robbers" and "goodies and baddies" seem harmless and funny, and the young characters, played by adults, create much of the play's comedy. Yet the song in which children are reminded that "if you cross your fingers / you can get up off the ground again" is deeply ironic. In childhood, death is reversible; in adulthood, it is not. Russell uses these early scenes to foreshadow the ending and to suggest that children absorb violence from the world around them long before they understand its consequences. The toy gun becomes a structural motif that will return as a real weapon.

Sammy is the character most closely linked to violence, and his progression mirrors the play's movement from innocence to tragedy. As a boy he is aggressive and reckless; as a teenager he threatens a bus conductor with a knife; as a young man he carries a real gun. During the robbery that he persuades Mickey to join, he shoots the filling station attendant, and Mickey's horrified cry, "You shot him, you shot him", shows the moment when violence stops being a game. The repetition conveys shock and disbelief, as though Mickey cannot make the words feel real. Sammy's path reflects the limited options for young men in deprived areas of Liverpool, where unemployment and boredom could push people towards crime.

Even the friendship between Mickey, Edward and Linda is tinged with violence.

Question number

They dare each other to throw stones through windows and treat it as an adventure, and the shared sense of rebellion bonds them. For Edward, who has grown up in a quiet middle-class house, this world seems exciting. Russell shows how class shapes attitudes to violence: when the police catch the children, the policeman treats Mrs Johnstone with threats but speaks to Mr Lyons as a social equal, suggesting that working-class families bear the consequences of behaviour that wealthier families can laugh off.

Violence is not confined to the working class, however. Mrs Lyons, outwardly refined, "hits Edward hard and instinctively" when he swears at her, repeating a word he has learned from Mickey. Her loss of control reveals the strain of her secret and her fear of losing Edward. Later, convinced that Mrs Johnstone is pursuing her, she cries "Wherever I go you'll be just behind me" and attacks her with "a lethal-looking kitchen knife". Russell suggests that violence grows from fear and guilt as well as poverty, and that Mrs Lyons's own crime, taking a child from his mother through manipulation and superstition, is a quieter form of violence that sets the whole tragedy in motion.

The most significant violence is the final scene. After Mickey is sent down for seven years, he leaves prison changed, depressed and dependent on pills. When he learns that Edward has been seeing Linda, he takes Sammy's gun and confronts his brother at the town hall, demanding "Does my child belong to you?" His despairing cry that he "could have been him" captures the injustice at the heart of the play: the twins share the same blood, yet one has had education and opportunity while the other has had unemployment and prison. When Mrs Johnstone reveals they are twins, Mickey's gun goes off, killing Edward, and the police shoot Mickey. The violence is shocking but also almost accidental, as though the brothers have been destroyed by forces larger than either of them.

Question number

Russell's context makes this violence a political statement. Writing in 1983, when Liverpool was suffering from factory closures, mass unemployment and the riots of the early eighties, he presents violence as the product of hopelessness. Mickey loses his job through no fault of his own, and with it his self-respect, which makes him easier for Sammy to lead into crime. The Narrator's closing question, which asks whether the deaths were caused by superstition or by "class", directs the audience to see social inequality as the true root of the violence.

In conclusion, violence is important because it charts the destruction of innocence. Russell moves it from pretend shootouts to real ones to show that the games of childhood were rehearsals for a tragedy shaped by class. By ending with two brothers dead on the floor, he forces his audience to recognise that a divided society does violence to everyone, rich and poor alike.

13 In Journey's End, Sherriff presents bravery not as the glamorous, medal-winning heroism celebrated by the Colonel's "I'll get you a Military Cross for this!", but as something quieter, costlier and far more ordinary: the daily decision to keep going in the face of almost certain death. Writing in 1928 as a former officer who had been wounded at Passchendaele, Sherriff seems determined to replace the patriotic myth of the dashing hero with a more honest picture, in which every man in the dugout is brave in his own way, and in which bravery often looks like fear being held in check.

The play's most obviously heroic figure is Stanhope. Osborne tells Hardy that there "isn't a man to touch him" as a commander, and we learn that he has already won the Military Cross and has served for three years without proper leave. Yet Sherriff

Question number

complicates this reputation from the start: Hardy's gossip about Stanhope's drinking prepares the audience to see the cracks. Stanhope's confession that "without being doped with whiskey" he would "go mad" is striking because it reframes his bravery as an exhausting performance sustained by alcohol. The adjective "doped" suggests a drugged numbness rather than courage, and the idea that he would go mad with fright implies that the fear never leaves him. For a 1928 audience, many of whom had served, this would have rung true: officers were expected to display a calm, public-school composure to protect the morale of their men, and Stanhope's insistence that the "officers are here to be respected" shows how heavily that expectation weighs on him. His bravery, Sherriff suggests, is real, but it is also slowly destroying him.

Raleigh, by contrast, begins with an idealised, schoolboy notion of bravery. He has asked to be sent to Stanhope's company because he hero-worshipped him at school, where Stanhope was captain of rugger, and he arrives "Just out from England" seeing the war as something exciting and romantic. Sherriff uses dramatic irony here, since the audience already knows how changed Stanhope is. When Raleigh is chosen for the raid, his bravery is genuine, but the Colonel's congratulations ring hollow. The repeated "Well done" and the exclamation "Splendid!" are delivered in front of a young man who has just seen Osborne killed, and the Colonel's focus on the prisoner and the medal exposes how senior officers could treat bravery as a statistic for a report. Stanhope's bitter response, "How awfully nice, if the brigadier's pleased", voices Sherriff's own anger at a command structure far removed from the cost of its orders. The final scene completes this critique: Raleigh, mortally wounded by a shell, becomes a frightened boy calling Stanhope "Dennis", and his early romantic courage is replaced by a pitiful and moving vulnerability.

Question number

Perhaps the most admirable bravery belongs to Osborne. At forty-five, a schoolmaster who could have stayed at home, he has volunteered, and his nickname "Uncle" captures his role as the steady, nurturing centre of the dugout. When he is told he will lead the raid, his understated "Oh" and his calm decision to leave his ring on the table because he does not "want the risk of losing it" show a man who knows he may die and chooses dignity over panic. His bravery is selfless: in the minutes before the raid he distracts the terrified Raleigh with talk of home and Alice in Wonderland, and the line "Quick, let's talk about pigs!" is comic on the surface but heartbreaking underneath. Sherriff implies that the bravest act is not charging a trench but protecting someone else from fear while hiding your own, which reflects the stiff upper lip valued by men of Osborne's class and generation.

Sherriff also extends bravery beyond the public-school elite. Trotter, a working-class officer promoted from the ranks, copes through cheerfulness and routine, drawing circles on paper to count down the hours of his duty. When Stanhope makes him second-in-command after Osborne's death, his simple promise "I won't let you down" shows a sense of duty that requires no grand speeches. Even Mason, the cook, quietly asks to join the men at the front: "I'd like to come along". Through these characters Sherriff reflects how the war opened officer ranks to men of different classes and suggests that bravery is not a privilege of breeding.

The most complex treatment of bravery is Hibbert. He claims to have neuralgia and tries to escape the front line, and at first he seems a coward. Yet when Stanhope threatens to "have [him] shot, for deserting" and points a revolver at him, Hibbert stands his ground, showing that he is prepared to die rather than return to the trench. Stanhope's response is crucial: he admits that he feels the

Question number

same terror, and they agree to face it together. Sherriff here shows remarkable sympathy for a condition that was poorly understood. Shell shock was not officially recognised as an illness, and men who broke down were sometimes court-martialled and executed for cowardice, so Sherriff's choice to make Hibbert's fear understandable, and to have the hero confess the same fear, challenges the audience's assumptions about what a brave man is.

Ultimately, Sherriff presents bravery as endurance rather than glory. The medals and congratulations of the Colonel belong to an official version of war that the play quietly dismantles, while true bravery lies in Osborne's calm, Trotter's loyalty, Hibbert's struggle and Stanhope's exhausted perseverance. By ending with the dugout collapsing on the eve of the German offensive of March 1918, Sherriff reminds his audience that this bravery did not save these men, which makes it all the more tragic and all the more worthy of respect.

14 Humour is significant in Journey's End because it is the main way the men survive the war psychologically. Sherriff, who served as an officer on the Western Front, fills the dugout with jokes about soup, boots, earwigs and rats, but the laughter is never simply light relief. It is a shield against fear, a way of making the unbearable ordinary, and as the play moves towards the German offensive of March 1918 the humour darkens until it becomes a form of bitter protest. Its significance lies in this shift: by making the audience laugh with these men, Sherriff makes their deaths more painful.

From the opening scene, humour acts as a conversational device that allows the officers to avoid speaking directly about horror. Osborne first finds Hardy "drying a sock over a candle flame", a deliberately domestic and faintly absurd image, and

Question number

their talk about a dugout being blown up is quickly turned into a joke about how "There's nothing worse than dirt in your tea". The bathos here, moving from death to tea, shows how British officers were trained to treat danger with a stiff upper lip, and it also tells the audience something about the conditions without heavy exposition. Hardy's cheerful complaints about having "twenty-five right leg and nine left leg" boots, and his pun that the rusty grenades will "upset Jerry and make him offensive", reveal the shortages and decay of equipment, yet the comic tone keeps the scene bearable. A 1928 audience, many of whom had lived through these conditions, would have recognised this gallows humour as an authentic part of trench life.

Much of the play's comedy centres on Mason and food. In the exchange printed in the question, Osborne's dry remark that the soup has "a very deep yellow flavour" is funny because it is absurd: colour cannot be tasted, and the joke exposes the fact that the food is barely identifiable. Mason's innocent explanations, such as dismissing something in the food as "a bit o' rust off the pan", and the mock amazement that he has "washed his dish-cloth", turn the inadequate rations into a running joke. This matters because meals provide a ritual of normality in the dugout. The class structure is also visible: Mason is the servant who is gently mocked by his officers, but the humour is affectionate, and it suggests a shared endurance that crosses rank. Sherriff makes the audience fond of Mason, so his later quiet request to join the men in the line has real weight.

Trotter is perhaps the character whose humour is most significant for his own survival. Described as "short and fat", he is the one officer who seems to have put on weight, which creates a comic visual contrast with the "tall and slim" Stanhope. His obsession with food, insisting that "there's cutlets and cutlets", and his chatter about his garden at home make him seem unimaginative, and Stanhope even

Question number

envies him for this. Yet Sherriff hints that Trotter's jokes are a deliberate defence: he draws circles on paper to tick off the hours of duty, which is comic but also reveals how slowly time passes under the threat of death. Through Trotter, a working-class officer risen from the ranks, Sherriff suggests that humour was a coping strategy available to men of every background.

The earwig race is a good example of how humour exposes the boredom and helplessness of trench warfare. The description of how "you dig your earwig in the ribs and steer him with a match" is ridiculous, but the fact that grown men organise races between insects shows the endless waiting experienced at the front, where the real enemy was often monotony. Osborne's hyperbolic reaction to news of the coming attack, "I mustn't miss that! I'll make a note in my diary", turns the most terrifying news into social small talk. The audience laughs, but also understands that the joke is a way of not panicking.

As the play progresses, the humour becomes darker and more pointed. Stanhope's sarcastic suggestion to Hibbert that they "hold each other's hands" and jump "every time a rat squeaks" is mocking, but it also, unexpectedly, expresses his own fear and his offer of companionship. Before the raid, Osborne recalls Alice in Wonderland and tells Raleigh "Quick, let's talk about pigs!", using nonsense to block out the terror of what is about to happen. The comic line is significant precisely because it is so out of place; the audience knows that Osborne is about to die, so the humour becomes almost unbearably poignant.

Finally, humour becomes a weapon. When the Colonel celebrates the raid, Stanhope replies "How awfully nice, if the brigadier's pleased". The upper-class politeness of "awfully nice" is bitterly ironic, because Osborne and several men are dead and the brigadier's satisfaction rests on a single captured German boy. Here Sherriff uses

Question number

sarcasm to criticise the attitude of senior commanders who valued strategy and reports above the lives of their men, a criticism that resonated with the disillusionment of the late 1920s.

Humour, then, is far more than comic relief. It reveals the conditions, characterises the men, binds them together across class and rank, and finally gives voice to anger. Sherriff makes us laugh so that the silence at the end of the play, when the dugout collapses and there is no one left to make a joke, feels all the more devastating.

15 Queen Victoria is significant in The Empress because she stands at the centre of the play's exploration of power, empire and belonging. She gives the play its title, yet Gupta presents her not simply as a distant monarch but as a lonely, curious and sometimes surprisingly open-minded woman whose friendship with Abdul Karim challenges the racial hierarchy of her own court. At the same time, her privilege throws into sharp relief the suffering of the Indian characters who live under her rule in London's docks and streets. Victoria is therefore significant both as a character and as a symbol of the Empire, with all its contradictions.

The line printed in the question captures this double significance. Victoria's use of the royal "We" in "We are after all the Empress of India" reminds the audience that she speaks as an institution, not merely a person. The phrase "only fitting" suggests that she sees Abdul's service as a natural tribute from a conquered land, which reflects the imperial mindset of 1887, when she had held the title Empress of India for just over a decade. Yet her description of Abdul as "such a noble gentleman" is unexpectedly respectful, and it sets up the tension that drives this strand of the play: the Queen sees dignity in a man whom her household

Question number

dismisses as a servant. Historically, Abdul Karim was sent to Victoria as a gift for her Golden Jubilee, and Gupta uses this real episode to examine how personal warmth and imperial ownership could exist side by side.

Victoria's relationship with Abdul is the main reason she matters to the play's message. She insists that "to me it is a person's character that is important", which positions her, perhaps surprisingly, as more tolerant than her aristocratic courtiers. When Abdul returns to India for a time, she admits that she "will be at a great loss without" him, revealing an emotional dependence that her household finds scandalous. Historically, Abdul rose from table servant to Munshi, her teacher, and she studied Urdu with him, which caused deep resentment at court. Gupta seems to suggest that Victoria's affection allows Abdul to speak to her about the "daily humiliation of abuse" faced by her Indian subjects, so she becomes a channel through which the audience hears about injustice. However, a modern audience might also question how far this friendship changes anything: the Queen's kindness to one man does not alter the system that exploits millions.

Gupta also presents Victoria as a woman confined by her own position. She refers to the "procedures" she "must adhere to" at Court, and her life is shaped by protocol, advisers and family politics, as shown when Lady Sarah relays messages from the Prince of Wales and Victoria responds, "Convey this back to Bertie". Historically, a lady-in-waiting was a noblewoman serving a woman of higher rank, and Gupta uses this relationship to show both the intimacy and the rigid order of the royal household. Victoria's assertion that "He will do as we say" shows her authority, but there is also a sense that she is lonely at the top, a widow who had mourned Albert for decades and who craves genuine companionship.

The Golden Jubilee scenes reveal another side of her. Her excited recollection of

Question number

"Such crowds" and people "cheering with flags" shows a queen who enjoys the pageantry of her reign, while her determination that "We must write it all down" reflects the real Victoria's habit of recording her life in journals that she kept until shortly before her death. Moments where she "giggles" at the children's singing make her human and even endearing. Yet Gupta places these scenes of celebration alongside the hardship of Rani, Hari and the lascars, so the audience is forced to compare the Jubilee's glamour with the poverty of the Empire's subjects in the East End.

This contrast is one of Victoria's key dramatic functions. The image of her "eating an egg from a golden egg cup" is almost comic in its luxury, but it becomes uncomfortable when set against Rani's dismissal by the Matthews family or the lascars being "treated like animals" on board ship. Other characters' perceptions add to this picture. Rani, newly arrived, is amazed that she will be "breathing the same air" as the Queen, which shows the almost mythical status Victoria held for her Indian subjects. Hari, more cynical, says "So much money and so miserable", puncturing the myth and suggesting that wealth and power do not bring happiness. Gupta allows both views to stand, encouraging the audience to see Victoria as neither villain nor saint.

Victoria also shows compassion for those she rules. When she hears of the deaths of her subjects, she declares that "we can still feel for the suffering", which presents her as a monarch with a conscience, although the distance implied by "still" suggests that feeling is all she can offer. The play spans fourteen years of her reign, and as she ages, Abdul's position becomes increasingly vulnerable to the hostility of the court. Historically, after Victoria's death in 1901, her son had Abdul's letters burned and sent him back to India, which shows how completely his protection depended on her.

Question number

Overall, Queen Victoria is significant because she embodies the paradox of the Empire Gupta wants a modern audience to confront. She can be warm, curious and fair-minded towards an individual Indian man, yet she sits at the summit of a system that denies Indians a voice. Through her, Gupta reveals that the history of Britain and India is personal as well as political, and that the bonds formed across that divide were real, but fragile.

16 Prejudice is important in The Empress because it is the force that shapes almost every Indian character's experience of Victorian Britain. Gupta shows racism operating at every level of society, from the ship's deck to the royal household and the Houses of Parliament, and she exposes how the Empire depended on treating Indians as inferior. Yet prejudice is not only a source of suffering in the play; it is also what motivates characters to resist, organise and demand change. As Dadabhai puts it, "We need to reform the system". Writing in 2013, Gupta recovers a largely forgotten history of South Asians in nineteenth-century Britain and asks a modern audience to recognise how deep the roots of racial prejudice run.

The line printed in the question shows prejudice at the highest political level. Dadabhai's report that, "According to Lord Salisbury", an English constituency "is not ready to elect a 'Black man'" is delivered with controlled irony. The quotation marks around "Black man" suggest that Dadabhai is holding the phrase at arm's length, exposing its crudeness, while the attribution to the Prime Minister makes clear that this is not the prejudice of the ignorant but of the powerful. Historically, Salisbury made this remark about Dadabhai Naoroji in 1888, and Naoroji went on to win Finsbury Central in 1892 by a tiny majority, becoming the first Asian Member of Parliament. Gupta uses this real history to show that

Question number

prejudice can be challenged through democratic means. Dadabhai is described as "an alien in race, in custom, in religion", a phrase whose triple structure piles up difference to suggest that, to his opponents, he can never belong. His determination to "educate the British electorate" therefore turns the insult on its head: it is the British, not the Indian, who need educating.

Dadabhai's politics also widen the play's focus from individual insult to systemic injustice. He argues that Indians "pay the taxes but have no voice", a sharp antithesis that captures the unfairness of colonial rule and echoes the historical Naoroji's argument that Britain was draining India's wealth. His commitment to "fight the British through peaceful means" makes him a dignified, reasoned figure, and Gupta seems to present him as a model of resistance that refuses to become bitter.

Prejudice is shown in its most brutal form on board the ship. The lascars, Indian sailors working on British merchant vessels, are "treated like animals" by the Serang, and the simile strips them of their humanity. Dadabhai's quiet observation that the "English sailors seem to have an easier time of it" reveals a racial hierarchy within the working class itself, showing that prejudice was built into the structures of employment. Hari, who tries to improve the lascars' conditions, is branded a "poisonous influence", a metaphor that reveals how any challenge to the hierarchy was treated as contamination. After being beaten and abandoned at the Cape, he later returns to England and builds a life for himself, proudly announcing "I make furniture in Whitechapel". His story suggests that prejudice, though it can crush, can also harden a person's resolve to create an independent future.

Rani's experience is perhaps the most painful because it shows how quickly a person can be discarded. She has cared devotedly for the Matthews children as

Question number

their ayah, yet as soon as the family reaches England they dismiss her because they "have a nanny, an English one". The blunt addition of "an English one" reveals that her nationality, not her ability, is the reason. This reflects a real historical pattern: many families returning from India abandoned their ayahs on arrival, leaving them destitute in a foreign city. Through Rani, Gupta shows how prejudice intersects with gender and class, since a young, poor, Indian woman is left almost entirely without protection.

Even within the royal household, prejudice is everywhere. Lady Sarah's assumption about Abdul, "He probably doesn't even speak English", shows a casual dismissal based purely on race. As the Queen's affection for him grows, Lady Sarah's hostility becomes more active, and her offer to "arrange for his transportation back to India" reveals how far the court would go to remove an Indian man who had gained influence. The word "transportation" is chilling, because it treats a person like cargo, or like a convict being exiled. Historically, the real Abdul Karim faced intense resentment at court, which shows that not even the Queen's protection could shield him from racism. Interestingly, Abdul uses his closeness to Victoria to tell her about the "daily humiliation of abuse" her Indian subjects suffer, so even here, prejudice provokes a response.

Structurally, Gupta moves between these different worlds, the court at Windsor, the London docks, Parliament and the East End, so that the audience sees prejudice repeated in each setting. This pattern makes it clear that racism is not the fault of a few cruel individuals but a feature of the whole imperial system. At the same time, the contrast between Victoria's insistence that "it is a person's character that is important" and the behaviour of those around her highlights the hypocrisy of a society that claimed to be civilising the world.

Question number

In conclusion, prejudice is important in The Empress because it drives the plot, defines the characters' struggles and carries Gupta's central message. It is shown to be cruel, systemic and widespread, but also resistible. Dadabhai's election, Hari's independence and Rani's survival suggest that those who suffer prejudice are not merely victims but agents of change. For a modern, multicultural British audience, the play offers a reminder that the fight against racial injustice has a long history, and that it began with people whose names were almost forgotten.

17 Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald are significant in Refugee Boy because they offer Alem the stability, warmth and practical help that the asylum system itself fails to provide. Through them, Zephaniah and Sissay present a picture of ordinary British kindness towards refugees, but they avoid sentimentality: the Fitzgeralds are a real family with money worries, arguments and grief of their own. Their significance lies in this combination. They show that welcoming a refugee child is an act of love that carries genuine emotional cost, and they represent a humane Britain set against the cold, bureaucratic Britain of the courts.

The line printed in the question captures Mrs Fitzgerald's role. Her gentle question, "Alem, until you can go back home, you want to stay here with us, don't you? Not at the children's home", is phrased as a tag question, inviting Alem's agreement rather than imposing a decision on him. This matters because Alem has had almost every choice taken from him: he has been left in England by his father and has no control over his future. Mrs Fitzgerald gives him back a small measure of agency. The phrase "until you can go back home" is also tactful, since it respects Alem's hope of returning to his family rather than presuming that England is now his home. The contrast with "the children's home" is pointed, because the audience has already seen Alem bullied there by Sweeney, who tells

Question number

him "you're all poison". The Fitzgeralds' house is therefore presented as a place of safety in opposition to the institutional care system.

Mr Fitzgerald is warm and welcoming from the start, promising Alem "You'll be right at home here", and his cheerful, joking manner helps to put the boy at ease. However, the playwright also shows that fostering is demanding. Mr Fitzgerald reminds his wife that they "agreed on a couple of months", and his concern, "I don't want you hurt", reveals that his caution comes from love rather than coldness. He knows how attached his wife becomes to the young people they care for, and the audience gradually learns why. Mrs Fitzgerald's refusal to discuss a previous foster child, insisting that she "can't talk about Themba", hints at a past loss so painful that it still shapes the family. Their kindness is not naive; they have already experienced the heartbreak of caring for a vulnerable child who did not survive, and they choose to open their home again anyway. For a modern audience, this offers a moving insight into the emotional reality of foster care, where carers give children love, warmth and a positive experience of family life, knowing the placement may end at any moment.

The Fitzgeralds are also significant because they are presented as an ordinary family under pressure. Although Mr Fitzgerald works, money is tight, and the line "We can't afford a holiday" shows that the family's generosity is not the result of comfortable wealth. This makes their hospitality more admirable and also challenges the stereotype, popular in some newspapers at the time the novel was published in 2001, that refugees are a burden on a resentful public. Here, the people who have least to spare are the ones who give most. Their relationship with each other is affectionate, as when Mr Fitzgerald tells his wife "I love you, Mrs Fitzgerald", the playful formality suggesting a long, comfortable partnership that gives Alem a model of a stable family.

Question number

Their relationship with their daughter Ruth adds realism. Ruth is often angry and feels that "nobody tells [her] nothing", and the double negative gives her voice a sulky, teenage authenticity. Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald try to support her, as in their encouraging "That's great, Ruth", but the tensions in the household show that families are not perfect. This is important, because it prevents the Fitzgeralds from being idealised saviours. Instead, Alem enters a messy, loving home, and Ruth eventually becomes one of his strongest allies, helping to lead the campaign for the Kelos to stay.

Practically, the Fitzgeralds' knowledge of the legal system is vital. Mrs Fitzgerald takes a close interest in Alem's life, asking "Was it a good week, Alem?", and both carers guide him through the asylum process, helping him towards the "permission to stay in this country" that he needs. Interestingly, in the court scenes the play has the actors playing Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald also voice the Adjudicator and the Secretary of State. This theatrical choice is significant. It may suggest that the system is run by ordinary people who could, like the Fitzgeralds, choose compassion, or it may highlight the painful gap between the kindness of individuals and the impersonal decisions of the state.

The context of the play makes the Fitzgeralds' role even more meaningful. Alem, with an Ethiopian father and an Eritrean mother, has fled the war between the two countries that lasted from 1998 to 2000, and he is unwelcome in both. Like many young refugees, he must wait in temporary accommodation while the courts decide whether he can stay. Lemn Sissay, who adapted the novel for the stage, grew up in foster care and children's homes himself, and his adaptation gives particular weight to the difference that a caring foster family can make.

Question number

In conclusion, Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald are significant because they embody the best of the society Alem has arrived in. They are flawed, stretched and grieving, but they offer him love without conditions. Through them, the play argues that the true measure of a nation's response to refugees lies not only in its laws, but in the willingness of ordinary people to open their doors.

18 Courage is important in Refugee Boy because it is the quality that allows Alem, and the people who love him, to survive a world that seems determined to crush them. Zephaniah's story, adapted for the stage by Lemn Sissay, presents courage in many forms: the physical courage of standing up to soldiers and street thieves, the emotional courage of enduring loss and loneliness, and the political courage of challenging an unjust system. Importantly, the play suggests that courage is not something Alem possesses from the start, but something he learns, partly from his parents and partly from the friends who support him in England.

The extract printed in the question shows how central courage is to the relationship between Alem and his father. Mr Kelo's letter repeats the word "strong" three times: "I want you to be strong, now I need you to be strong more than ever, and your mother would want you to be strong". The repetition sounds like a father trying to steady himself as much as his son, and the shift from "want" to "need" suggests growing desperation. The reference to Alem's mother gives the plea an emotional weight, invoking her authority and love. This letter also reminds the audience of the courage it took for Mr Kelo to leave his son alone in England. Leaving Alem in a foreign country is heartbreaking, but he believes it is the only way to keep him safe while the fighting continues. The play therefore presents parental courage as a painful sacrifice, the willingness to be separated from a child in order to protect him.

Question number

The scenes in Ethiopia and Eritrea show courage in its most physical and frightening form. Because Alem has an Ethiopian father and an Eritrean mother, the family are targeted in both countries during the border war of 1998 to 2000, and soldiers order them to leave "or die". The stage direction "Blood sprays from her mouth" is shocking, forcing the audience to witness the violence that civilians suffered. Yet Mr and Mrs Kelo stand up to the soldiers to protect their son, and the urgent command "Stay still, Alem! Stay still!" shows a parent trying to shield a child at the moment of greatest danger. These flashback scenes are important because they explain why Alem cannot simply go home, and they give a British audience a vivid insight into the horrors that drive people to seek asylum. Later, Alem learns that his mother has been "killed by some very evil people", and his grief becomes another test of his endurance.

In England, courage takes on a quieter, more internal form. In the children's home, Alem's belief that he will soon be reunited with his family gives him the strength to cope, but he is constantly targeted by Sweeney, who tells him "you're all poison". The metaphor reveals the hostile, dehumanising attitudes some refugees faced, and although Mustapha warns him to "be careful in here", Alem eventually runs away. The play is honest here: courage has limits, and a child under such pressure cannot always endure. This makes Alem more believable and reminds the audience that young asylum seekers living in temporary accommodation often struggle with isolation and fear.

The play also questions what courage really is. When Alem is threatened by a hooded attacker who demands his bike, he refuses to hand it over despite the violent threats made against him. Ruth's response, that he was "brave" or "stupid", introduces a more sceptical view, suggesting that there is a fine line between

Question number

courage and recklessness. It shows that Alem, raised amid danger, relates to fear differently from his English friends, and it invites the audience to consider whether courage is always wise.

Perhaps the most significant form of courage in the play is the courage to face the legal system. Mr Kelo has warned Alem that a court is where they "punish you for things you haven't done", a line that reflects his experience of injustice at home and makes the British court seem threatening. Despite this, Alem attends his hearing and pleads his case. When the appeal is rejected, he still refuses to give up, insisting that the fight is about "our rights. Our human rights". The repetition and the expansion from "our rights" to "Our human rights" show Alem moving from personal survival to a universal principle. This links to the UK's legal responsibility under international law not to return refugees to places where they would face persecution, and the play implicitly asks whether Britain is living up to that promise.

Finally, the play shows that courage can be shared. Ruth and Mustapha organise a campaign with a band, a banner, leaflets for "Local shops, youth clubs, street corners" and a message on local radio, and the slogan "THE KELOS MUST STAY" is written in capitals that make it look and sound like a protest chant. This collective courage contrasts with Alem's earlier isolation in the children's home. It suggests that young people, often dismissed as powerless, have the bravery to challenge authority, and it gives the audience a sense of hope that community can stand up for those the system fails.

In conclusion, courage is important in Refugee Boy because it drives Alem's journey from a frightened boy left alone in a hotel to a young man fighting for his family's right to stay. The play presents courage as something inherited from his

Question number

parents' sacrifice, tested by violence, bullying and loss, and strengthened by friendship. By showing courage in so many forms, Zephaniah and Sissay encourage their audience to see refugees not as victims or burdens, but as people of extraordinary resilience.

19 In Animal Farm, education is important because it decides who holds power. Orwell presents knowledge as the true currency of the farm: those who can read, write and argue are able to rule, while those who cannot are left to believe whatever they are told. Education begins as a promise of liberation, but in the hands of the pigs it becomes a weapon of control, and Orwell, writing in 1945 about the betrayal of the Russian Revolution, warns that a population kept ignorant can be led into a tyranny worse than the one it overthrew.

At the start of the novel, education is presented as something hopeful and shared. Old Major is an intellectual figure whose wisdom comes from his long life and "much time for thought". His speech educates the animals politically, explaining that "Man is the only creature that consumes without producing", and it gives the cleverer animals "a new outlook on life". In this sense, old Major resembles Karl Marx, whose theories gave the working classes a language to understand their own oppression. Orwell suggests that education can awaken people to injustice, which is why the Rebellion is possible at all.

However, it is significant that the pigs, described as "the cleverest of the animals", take on the work of "teaching and organising the others". They teach themselves to read from an old spelling book belonging to Mr Jones's children, and this early detail quietly establishes the hierarchy which will later destroy the farm. Because only the pigs fully understand the principles of Animalism, they become its

Question number

interpreters, much as the Bolshevik leadership became the only authority on what Marxism meant. Education is therefore unequal from the beginning, and that inequality is the seed of the pigs' power.

The contrast between Snowball and Napoleon reveals two attitudes to education. Snowball sets up committees and reading and writing classes, and although some, such as the Wild Comrades' Re-education Committee, are comically doomed, his aim is to raise the animals up. The results are revealing. Benjamin can read as well as any pig but believes there is nothing worth reading, Clover learns the alphabet but cannot form words, and Boxer never gets beyond the letter D. Many animals cannot progress beyond "A". Orwell treats this gently but pointedly: the working animals, like the Russian peasantry, are left without the literacy that would allow them to check what they are told. Napoleon, by contrast, "took no interest in Snowball's committees", claiming that the education of the young was "more important than anything". The irony is chilling. He removes Jessie and Bluebell's nine puppies to be educated in private, and when they reappear they are savage dogs who chase Snowball off the farm. Napoleon's "education" is indoctrination, producing a loyal force of violence, much as Stalin built up the secret police and moulded the young through organisations devoted to the Party. Orwell shows that education in a totalitarian state is not about learning but about obedience.

Once Snowball is gone, the pigs' superior literacy becomes their chief tool of oppression. Squealer, who could "turn black into white", uses language to bewilder the others, often citing statistics and long words that they cannot question. The Seven Commandments, painted on the barn wall, are quietly altered: "No animal shall sleep in a bed" gains the words "with sheets", and "No animal shall kill any other animal" gains "without cause". Because most animals cannot read well enough, they assume their memories must be faulty. Orwell structures these

Question number

revisions gradually across the novel, so that the reader, unlike the animals, can see the pattern. This mirrors the Soviet rewriting of history, in which photographs were doctored and Trotsky was erased from the official record. The image of Squealer found at night beside a broken ladder and a pot of white paint is darkly comic, yet Muriel and Clover cannot fully grasp what it means, which shows how ignorance makes the animals complicit in their own exploitation.

The sheep reveal the opposite of education: mindless repetition. Their bleating of "Four legs good, two legs bad" drowns out debate at meetings, and slogans replace thought. Orwell seems to suggest that propaganda flourishes where real education is absent. Similarly, Boxer's maxims, "I will work harder" and "Napoleon is always right", show how a hard-working but uneducated animal can be exploited. Boxer is perhaps the most tragic victim of the pigs' monopoly on knowledge: when the van comes to take him away, it is Benjamin who reads the words on its side and understands that Boxer is being sent to the knacker. The moment is devastating because literacy arrives too late to save him, and Orwell implies that the educated who stay silent, like Benjamin until this point, share some responsibility.

By the end of the novel, education has become entirely the property of the ruling class. The young pigs are taught separately and discouraged from playing with the other young animals, establishing a new privileged elite. The single remaining commandment, "ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS", is a grotesque piece of logic that only a population without education could accept. In the final scene, the animals look from pig to man and cannot tell which is which, so the pigs' learning has turned them into the very humans old Major condemned.

Ultimately, Orwell presents education as both the hope and the danger of

Question number

revolution. Knowledge liberates the animals at first, but because it is concentrated in the hands of a few, it becomes the means of their enslavement. As a democratic socialist who had seen propaganda at work during the Spanish Civil War, Orwell uses this fable to argue that freedom depends on an educated, questioning public, and that a society which leaves its people unable to read the writing on the wall will always be ruled by those who can.

20 Old Major appears only in the first chapter of Animal Farm and dies three nights after his speech, yet he is arguably the most significant figure in the novel. He is the source of the dream, the ideology and the song that drive the whole story, and the rest of the novel can be read as a slow betrayal of everything he stood for. Through him, Orwell explores how a noble revolutionary vision, inspired by Marx and carried forward by Lenin, was corrupted in Soviet Russia once it fell into the hands of those who wanted power for themselves.

Orwell establishes old Major's authority immediately. He is "the prize Middle White boar", exhibited under the name of Willingdon Beauty, but to the animals he is simply old Major, a title suggesting both respect and rank. He is "so highly regarded on the farm" that everyone is willing to lose an hour's sleep to hear him. Orwell describes him as "majestic-looking" with a "wise and benevolent appearance", even though his tushes have never been cut, and the detail is significant: he is gentle in manner yet still carries the potential for force. The fact that he has "had a strange dream" and wishes to "communicate it" gives him an almost prophetic quality, and in this sense he resembles Marx, whose writings imagined a future that he did not live to see.

His speech is the ideological heart of the novel. Orwell gives him powerful rhetoric,

Question number

addressing the animals as "comrades", a term which flattens hierarchy and invites unity. He describes their lives as "miserable, laborious, and short" and argues that "Man is the only creature that consumes without producing". This mirrors the Marxist analysis of capitalism, in which the ruling class profits from the labour of workers. His rhetorical questions and emotive appeals make his vision feel inevitable, and the conclusion, "All animals are equal", becomes the founding principle of Animalism. Old Major also warns the animals that "in fighting against Man, we must not come to resemble him", and lists the human habits they must avoid: living in houses, sleeping in beds, drinking alcohol, trading and touching money. These warnings become the basis of the Seven Commandments, which shows how directly the farm's laws descend from him.

However, Orwell does not present old Major as flawless. He admits that he himself has lived a comfortable life, and so his place among the victims of Man is questionable. There is also a sense of pride in the way he sets himself apart as a wise elder. Most significantly, his ideas are abstract: he offers a dream but no plan, and he leaves the practical organisation of the Rebellion to others. Orwell seems to suggest, like many critics of revolutionary theory, that an idealistic vision without safeguards can easily be hijacked. The pigs inherit his ideas but reshape them into "a complete system of thought" that only they can interpret.

"Beasts of England" extends his significance beyond his death. The song, which old Major remembers from his childhood, is a pastiche of "The Internationale", the anthem of international socialism adopted by the Bolsheviks. Its vision of "the golden future time" unites the animals emotionally and they sing it repeatedly. Its fate is symbolic. After the executions, Napoleon bans it, claiming that the Rebellion is now complete, and replaces it with Minimus's song praising the farm and its leader. This parallels Stalin's replacement of "The Internationale" as the

Question number

Soviet anthem in 1944, and shows how the original revolutionary dream was officially buried.

Old Major's skull is another symbol of his legacy. It is dug up and placed on a post by the flagstaff, where the animals must file past it in reverence. This recalls the embalming of Lenin's body and its display in Red Square, which Stalin used to legitimise his own rule. Orwell suggests that the leaders exploit the dead revolutionary as a sacred relic while betraying his principles. Fittingly, at the end of the novel Napoleon announces that the skull has been buried, and the word "Comrade" is abolished. Once the pigs have become human in all but appearance, they no longer need old Major's memory even as propaganda.

Structurally, old Major's prophecies return with tragic irony. He warns Boxer that on the day his muscles fail, Jones will sell him to the knacker. This is fulfilled exactly, but by Napoleon, not Jones, which shows that the pigs have become the new oppressors. Likewise, his warning that animals must not come to resemble Man is directly overturned in the final chapter when the pigs walk on their hind legs and the animals can no longer tell pig from man. The circular structure of the novel, which begins with a meeting in Jones's barn and ends with pigs and humans playing cards in the farmhouse, makes the reader measure every event against old Major's speech.

In conclusion, old Major is significant because he gives the novel its moral measure. His dream represents the genuine hope of the Russian Revolution in 1917, and its corruption represents what Orwell, a democratic socialist, saw as the betrayal of that hope under Stalin. By killing old Major so early, Orwell suggests that revolutions often lose their idealists first, and that ideas, however just, are only as good as the people who inherit them.

Question number

21

In Lord of the Flies, Golding uses symbols to make visible what is happening inside the boys. Objects such as the conch, Piggy's glasses and the signal fire stand for the fragile structures of civilisation, while the beast and the pig's head represent the savagery that lies beneath. The changing fortunes of these symbols chart the boys' descent, and because Golding wrote the novel in 1954 after serving in the Royal Navy during the Second World War, they also carry his bleak warning about the darkness in all human beings.

The conch is the first and clearest symbol of order and democracy. When Ralph blows it on the beach, it summons the scattered boys and brings them into an assembly, and it quickly becomes the rule that whoever holds it may speak. Its fragile beauty, a delicate shell that is easily damaged, suggests that civilisation is precious but vulnerable. As early as Chapter 2, Jack dismisses it, claiming that it does not count on top of the mountain, and by the final chapters Piggy clings to it as if it could still restore sense. At Castle Rock, Roger's boulder strikes Piggy and "the conch exploded into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist". The verb "exploded" and the absolute finality of "ceased to exist" show that law has been destroyed in the same moment that Piggy is killed, and Golding links the two to suggest that reason and order cannot survive without each other. In the context of the 1930s and 1940s, when democracies across Europe collapsed into dictatorship, the shattering of the conch reflects how quickly fragile institutions could be swept away by force.

Piggy's glasses symbolise intellect, science and the practical power of rational thought. They are the only means of making fire, so they are literally the boys' link to rescue. Yet Golding shows that knowledge is vulnerable to strength. Jack

Question number

snatches them in Chapter 2 to light the first fire, and later one lens is broken when Jack hits Piggy, so that Piggy's vision is half destroyed, mirroring the way reason is being damaged on the island. When the hunters raid the shelter at night and steal the glasses, it is clear that power has passed to those who control force. Golding may be suggesting that science itself is neutral: it can be used to signal for rescue or to serve a tyrant, a deeply relevant idea in the years after the atomic bomb.

The signal fire represents hope and the boys' connection with the adult world. At first, "To keep a clean flag of flame flying on the mountain was the immediate end and no one looked further". The alliteration of "flag of flame flying" creates an image of something proud and patriotic, almost like a national flag. Yet fire is ambiguous from the start: the first fire burns out of control and the boy with the mulberry-coloured birthmark disappears, a disturbing hint of destruction. When Jack's hunters let the fire go out while they kill a pig, a ship passes by, and the choice between rescue and hunting becomes a choice between civilisation and savagery. Finally, Jack sets the whole island alight to hunt Ralph, so fire, once the symbol of rescue, becomes a weapon. With bitter irony, it is this fire that attracts the naval officer, so the boys are saved by an act of destruction.

The beast symbolises the fear and evil inside the boys. It begins as the littlun's "beastie" and grows as their savagery grows. Simon alone grasps its meaning when he suggests "maybe it's only us", but he cannot express it clearly and the others laugh. The dead parachutist, whom the boys mistake for the beast, is significant because it is a "sign" from the adult world, a casualty of the war that rages beyond the island. Golding implies that the adults are no different: the real beast is the same human capacity for violence that has produced a world war.

Question number

The Lord of the Flies itself, the sow's head on a stick, is the novel's most powerful symbol. Its title is a translation of Beelzebub, a name for the devil, and the head, covered in flies and grinning, becomes the beast made physical. In Simon's hallucinated conversation, it tells him that he cannot hunt and kill the beast, because it is "part of you". The head is left as an offering, which shows that the hunters have created a primitive religion based on fear. Simon, a Christ-like figure who goes to tell the truth, is then killed by the boys, echoing the Biblical sacrifice of an innocent who brings knowledge.

Golding also uses painted faces as a symbol of the loss of identity. When Jack first paints his face, "the mask was a thing on its own", and he is "liberated from shame and self-consciousness". The mask allows the boys to commit acts they would never commit as themselves, suggesting that civilisation depends on accountability.

In conclusion, the symbols in Lord of the Flies are significant because they map the gradual triumph of savagery over order. The final image, of the naval officer in his uniform with a warship waiting offshore, suggests that the adult world is no rescue at all, because it is fighting its own war. Golding, who described man as producing evil as a bee produces honey, rejects the optimism of earlier island stories such as The Coral Island. Through his symbols, he shows that the darkness is not out in the jungle but within the boys, and within all of us.

22 Golding presents human nature as fundamentally flawed: beneath the polite surface of civilisation lies a capacity for cruelty that emerges as soon as the rules are removed. The boys are not monsters at the start of the novel, but ordinary English schoolchildren, and that is precisely the point. Writing after the Second

Question number

World War, in which he had seen what supposedly civilised nations could do, Golding uses the island as a laboratory to test human nature, and his conclusion is that evil comes not from outside but from within.

At first, Golding shows that the boys carry the habits of civilisation with them. They long for structure, voting for a chief, taking names like a school register and agreeing to put their hands up "like at school". Jack's boast that "We're English, and the English are best at everything" captures a confident, imperial belief in British superiority, which the novel will brutally undermine. In the extract, Roger throws stones near the littlun Henry but deliberately misses. Golding explains that "Here, invisible yet strong, was the taboo of the old life", and that around Henry "was the protection of parents and school and policemen and the law". The paradox "invisible yet strong" is significant: the rules are not physically present, yet they still restrain Roger. However, Golding adds that Roger's arm was "conditioned by a civilization that knew nothing of him and was in ruins". The word "conditioned" suggests that goodness is learned behaviour rather than natural, and the reference to a civilisation "in ruins" reminds us that the adult world is itself at war. Human nature, in this reading, is held in check only by external fear of punishment.

As the novel progresses, Golding shows these restraints falling away. Jack's first attempt to kill a piglet fails because of "the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh", but soon he is obsessed with hunting. After the first successful kill, Golding describes the hunters' knowledge that they had imposed their will on a living thing and taken away its life, comparing the feeling to a long, satisfying drink. The sensual image suggests that violence is pleasurable and addictive. The chant "Kill the pig. Cut her throat" becomes a ritual, and the face paint allows Jack to be "liberated from shame and self-consciousness". Golding

Question number

implies that anonymity frees the savage self, much as uniforms and crowds allowed ordinary people to commit atrocities in Nazi Germany.

Roger embodies the darkest potential of human nature. The boy who once missed Henry later levers the rock that kills Piggy "with a sense of delirious abandonment", and he sharpens a stick at both ends to hunt Ralph, an echo of the stick that held the pig's head. His progression from restraint to sadism suggests that the instinct for cruelty was always there, waiting only for the protection of "the law" to disappear. Jack's tribe also reveals the human appetite for power and for submission to a strongman, since the boys willingly give up the conch's democracy for meat, paint and a chief who beats them. This mirrors the rise of dictators such as Hitler, who offered security and identity in exchange for freedom.

Even the more civilised characters are not immune. Ralph and Piggy take part in the frenzied dance in which Simon is killed, and Piggy afterwards insists it was an accident, showing how humans rationalise their own guilt. Ralph, by contrast, cannot deny it: he admits that it was murder. Golding suggests that no one is purely good; the capacity for evil exists in everyone. Piggy's question, "What are we? Humans? Or animals? Or savages?", becomes the central question of the novel, and its rising list suggests that the boys are sliding down a scale.

Yet Golding does present goodness. Simon helps the littluns reach fruit and works on the shelters when others play. He is the one who understands the beast, suggesting "maybe it's only us". In his encounter with the Lord of the Flies, the head tells him that the beast is "part of you", articulating Golding's central idea. Simon's murder, as he tries to bring the truth that the beast is only a dead parachutist, echoes the crucifixion of Christ, and suggests that humanity tends to

Question number

destroy those who reveal uncomfortable truths. Golding was a religious writer in a broad sense, and the novel can be read as a version of the Fall, in which the island begins as an Eden and is corrupted by original sin within the boys themselves.

The ending reinforces this pessimistic vision. Ralph, hunted through a burning island, is saved only by a naval officer who remarks that he would have expected British boys to put up a better show. The irony is sharp, since the officer is himself engaged in a war. Ralph "wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart", and the phrase "man's heart" universalises the boys' behaviour: it is not just about children, but about all humanity.

In conclusion, Golding presents human nature as divided between a learned, fragile civilisation and a deep, instinctive savagery. He deliberately rejects the optimism of R. M. Ballantyne's The Coral Island, in which British boys bring order to a wild island. Writing in the shadow of the Holocaust and the atomic bomb, Golding argues that the defects of society come from the defects of human nature, and that the "taboo of the old life" is all that stands between us and the darkness.

23 In Anita and Me, mothers are important because they shape the identities of their daughters and reveal the values of the two communities Meena grows up between. Syal contrasts Meena's devoted, educated Mama with Anita's neglectful mother Deirdre, and surrounds them with a chorus of other mother figures, from the women of Tollington to Auntie Shaila and Nanima. Through these mothers, Syal explores what it means to belong, and how a British Indian girl in the late 1960s learns to value the inheritance her own mother offers.

Question number

The quotation in the question shows how motherhood brings the community together. When Sunil is born, Meena is surprised to discover "so many mothers in the village", each arriving "bearing gifts or full of advice". The balanced phrasing suggests both kindness and interference, and there is gentle comedy in the adult narrator's memory of this stream of visitors. Mrs Keithley's bags of romper suits and cardigans show that the working-class white women of Tollington share a practical, generous culture of mothering. Syal suggests that, for a moment, motherhood crosses the boundaries of race: in a mining village where women ran the home and often worked in local factories, a new baby is a shared event. This is significant in a novel that often exposes prejudice, because it shows a more hopeful side of Tollington.

Mama herself is the most important mother in the novel, and Syal presents her through Meena's frequently resentful but ultimately admiring eyes. Unlike most of the village women, she is an educated professional, a teacher at Meena's own school, which Meena finds embarrassing because they are separated only by "a mere strip of playground". Yet her education is a source of strength. She believes in Meena's intelligence and insists on the importance of the eleven-plus, and when Meena is in hospital she promises "we'll study together every day". In the context of Indian immigrant families in the 1960s, many of whom saw education as the route to security and respect in a new country, Mama's ambitions for her daughter are a form of love. The ending, in which Meena passes the exam and the family prepares to leave Tollington, suggests that Mama's quiet determination has given her daughter a future beyond the village.

Mama also represents Meena's connection with India. She cooks the home food that comforts the visiting aunties and uncles, described as "the food their far-away mothers made", an image which links mothering with memory and

Question number

migration. Through her, Syal shows how first-generation immigrant women preserved their culture far from their own families. Significantly, Mama "rarely raised her voice", and her dignity contrasts with the noise and chaos of the Rutters. However, Syal does not idealise her. After Sunil's birth Mama admits "I can't cope any more", a raw confession that reveals the isolation of a mother raising children without the extended family she would have had in India. This vulnerability makes her more human and shows the hidden pressures on immigrant women.

Nanima's arrival from India answers this need. As Mama's own mother, she restores the traditional pattern of the extended family, in which grandmothers share the work of raising children. For Meena she is transformative. Nanima speaks little English, but her stories of family history and of Partition give Meena a sense of belonging to something larger than Tollington. Meena, who earlier admits to fabricating stories because she lacks a history, now gains a real one through her grandmother. Syal suggests that mothers and grandmothers are the keepers of cultural memory, passing it down through food, language and storytelling.

In contrast, Deirdre Rutter is an example of a mother who fails her children. Tracey's plaintive "Where's me mum? I'm hungry" exposes neglect through its simple, childlike dialect. Deirdre has affairs and finally leaves her daughters to live with her lover, yet Tracey still "sobbed into my shoulder", showing that even a poor mother leaves a deep wound when she goes. Deirdre's influence helps to explain Anita's behaviour: her cruelty, her need to dominate and her attraction to Sam Lowbridge can be read as the result of a childhood without care. When Deirdre accuses Mama with "Cos we ain't good enough for yow lot", her anger reveals insecurity about class as well as hostility to the Kumars. Syal, who grew up in a similar Black Country village, uses Deirdre to show how the breakdown of the

Question number

traditional family in the late 1960s left some children without stability.

Auntie Shaila offers yet another model. She is strict and domineering with her "two docile daughters", Pinky and Baby, even cuffing one of them on the back of the head, and she criticises Mama for pampering Sunil. Through her, Syal gently satirises the pressures within Indian families for daughters to be obedient and to serve at family gatherings. Meena's dislike of being compared with these dutiful girls reflects her struggle between Indian expectations and the freedom she sees in Anita.

Ultimately, mothers are important because Meena's journey is largely a movement from Anita's mother's world towards her own mother's. At the start she longs to be a Rutter; by the end she recognises the love and strength in Mama and Nanima. Syal suggests that a girl's identity is formed by the women who raise her, and that for a child caught between two cultures in 1960s Britain, the mother's inheritance can be a source of pride rather than embarrassment.

24 Anger in Anita and Me is significant because it exposes the tensions that lie beneath the surface of both Tollington and the Kumar household. Syal shows anger in many forms: the frustrated rage of a declining working-class village, the racist hatred into which that rage is channelled, the protective anger of parents and the confused fury of a child growing up between two cultures. Uncle Alan's plea, "Anger is good! But not used this way!", captures the novel's central idea: anger can be a justified response to injustice, but it becomes destructive when it is turned against the wrong target.

The most public and disturbing anger belongs to Sam Lowbridge. At the Tollington

Question number

Spring Fair, when it is announced that the money raised will go to the church roof fund, Sam demands, "What's that gonna do for us, eh?" His question voices a genuine grievance. Tollington is a former mining village whose work and community are disappearing, and Syal hints that the young men of the late 1960s felt abandoned, with few prospects. Yet Sam turns this frustration into racism, complaining that the money goes "to some darkies we've never met". The shocking slur, spoken in public, shows how economic anger could be redirected onto immigrants. In 1968, Enoch Powell's "Rivers of Blood" speech gave a political voice to this kind of hostility, and the rise of skinhead gangs targeting Asian people reflects the same pattern. Uncle Alan's exclamatory response, with its repeated pleading, suggests that he understands Sam's anger but sees that it is "going the wrong way". Syal invites the reader to sympathise with the causes of Sam's resentment while condemning its expression.

Sam's anger escalates into violence. Meena later overhears Anita boasting to Sherrie about how she watched Sam and his gang attack an Indian bank manager, gloating that "They really did him over". This is a turning point for Meena, and her own anger here is significant. She realises that the friend she idolised can take pleasure in racial violence, and her fury helps to break the spell Anita has held over her. The racist attack brings home to Meena that the threat she has half ignored is real, and her anger becomes a form of moral awakening. This reflects the experience of many South Asian families who had arrived after the 1948 British Nationality Act, invited to help rebuild Britain, only to face hostility in their new communities.

Within the Kumar family, anger is presented more as a sign of love and values. Mr Kumar is usually gentle, but his "famous temper" erupts when Meena uses coarse language picked up from the village or suggests that Sunil should be left at "the

Question number

orphanage for a trial period". His fury at this remark is understandable: for a man who has left his homeland and his wider family behind, family is precious, and Meena's casual cruelty to her brother is an attack on everything he values. Syal uses these moments to show the challenge of raising children in a culture whose influences parents cannot control.

Mama's anger is equally significant. When Meena steals money from her purse and lies about Pinky and Baby, Meena imagines her mother as the goddess Kali, "a black-faced snarling woman". The comparison is humorous, as the narrator exaggerates her childhood terror, but it also connects Mama to Hindu mythology and to an image of righteous female power. Kali is a goddess who destroys evil, so Mama's anger is presented as moral rather than cruel. Because Mama "rarely raised her voice", her anger has real force when it comes.

Meena's own anger reveals her inner conflict. When Sunil is born, she "disliked him on first sight", a feeling of jealousy that many children experience when they must share their parents' attention. Yet her rebelliousness throughout the novel, her lies, swearing and desire to belong to Anita's gang, can be read as a kind of anger at her position. She resents being different, and resents the expectations of the Indian community, embodied in the obedient Pinky and Baby. Syal suggests that the anger of a second-generation immigrant child is partly a search for identity.

Deirdre's anger shows another side of class conflict. Although she normally takes little interest in her daughters, she confronts Mama when she believes Meena has been stopped from seeing Anita: "Cos we ain't good enough for yow lot". Her dialect and defensive tone reveal a sense of inferiority. Ironically, Deirdre accuses the Kumars of prejudice, which shows how class resentment and racial tension are tangled together in Tollington. Her outburst also hints at the guilt of a neglectful

Question number

mother, protecting her daughter only when her own pride is involved.

Finally, the novel's structure shows anger leading to growth. By the end, Meena has learned to recognise the destructive anger of Sam and Anita for what it is, and she leaves Tollington with a stronger sense of her own identity. Syal, writing in 1996 but looking back to her own childhood, presents anger as an inevitable part of a changing Britain. The significance of Uncle Alan's words is that anger itself is not the problem. The problem is when people direct it at their neighbours rather than at the real causes of their hardship, and through Meena's journey Syal shows a child learning to tell the difference.

25 In The Woman in Black, obsession is the engine of the whole story. Susan Hill shows that a mind which cannot let go of a loss, a grievance or a secret becomes trapped in the past, and that this fixation spreads outwards until it poisons a family, a town and finally the narrator himself. Jennet Humfrye is the most extreme example, but Hill suggests that Arthur Kipps, Alice Drablow and the people of Crythin Gifford are all, in different ways, held captive by the same tragedy.

Jennet's obsession begins in love rather than hatred. As an unmarried mother she is forced by her family to give up her son, Nathaniel, to her sister Alice and her husband, and to leave him. In a society in which pregnancy outside marriage brought disgrace on a respectable family, Jennet has no real choice, yet Hill makes us feel the cost of that "choice" through her letters, which Kipps reads in the house. The short, possessive declaration "He is mine" shows that she cannot accept the arrangement, and her threat "I shall kill us both before I let him go" reveals how a mother's natural attachment has been twisted into something desperate and violent. Hill seems to invite some sympathy here: the obsession is partly created

Question number

by the rigid moral code of the time, which values a family's reputation above a mother's bond with her child.

When Nathaniel is drowned on the marshes, "sucked into the quicksands" in front of Jennet's eyes, her obsession changes from protecting her son to punishing those she blames. The extract's phrase "her pent-up hatred and desire for revenge permeated the air all around" captures this transformation. The adjective "pent-up" suggests years of suppressed resentment, as though her feelings have been dammed up by the community's judgement, and "permeated" implies that her hatred is no longer contained in a person at all but has seeped into the atmosphere of Eel Marsh House. This is typical of the Gothic, where a place is haunted by the unresolved passions of the dead. Because a child dies "in some violent or dreadful circumstance" each time she is seen, her revenge is endlessly repeated, as if she is compelled to recreate her own loss in every other family. Obsession is therefore significant as the cause of the supernatural horror: it is what turns a grieving woman into a malevolent ghost.

Hill also shows obsession in the way the Drablow family preserve the past. The nursery, with "the bed, made up and all complete", has been kept in perfect order for decades as though Nathaniel might return. It functions like a shrine, and the "toys, so many toys" suggest both the love lavished on the boy and the inability of the adults to move on. The rocking chair moving by itself in the locked room implies that Jennet's obsessive grief still occupies the space. Alice Drablow, living on alone in the isolated house and keeping every letter, seems equally imprisoned by memory.

The community of Crythin Gifford is shown to be obsessed in a quieter way, by fear and secrecy. Kipps notices "the half-hints and dark mutterings" whenever Mrs

Question number

Drablow is mentioned, and Mr Jerome becomes visibly frightened when asked to go near the house. Their silence is significant because it shows how deeply the deaths of their children, including Mr Jerome's, have scarred them. Although the novel is set in a period which prided itself on rationalism and scientific progress, Hill suggests that in isolated rural communities superstition still exerted a powerful hold. The townspeople's refusal to speak is a form of obsession with avoiding the subject, and ironically it leaves the outsider, Kipps, unprotected.

Kipps's own obsession develops across the novel and gives it its tragic structure. At first he is a confident, rational young solicitor who dismisses local fears, and his determination to finish sorting Mrs Drablow's papers shows a conscientious professional pride. He admits "it was pretty tedious going but I persevered", and even after the terror of the pony and trap on the causeway he insists on returning, feeling that he "could not run away from that place". Hill presents this persistence as admirable but dangerous: his need to prove himself and to uncover the identity of the woman in black draws him deeper into her story. His rationalism gradually collapses, so that a sceptic becomes someone who must accept the reality of ghosts.

The frame narrative shows that this obsession never leaves him. On Christmas Eve, years later, his stepchildren tell ghost stories in a cosy family scene that recalls the Victorian tradition of fireside tales. Kipps leaves the room in distress because his memories are too painful; he has spent his life trying to suppress them and feels he "should have no rest" until he has written them down. The final revelation, that his son Joseph was killed and his wife Stella fatally injured after he saw the woman in black in the park, explains why. The last words, "They have asked for my story. I have told it. Enough.", are blunt and final, suggesting that writing is his attempt to exorcise a memory that has haunted him for his whole

Question number

adult life.

Ultimately, Hill presents obsession as both the cause and the consequence of the haunting. Jennet's obsessive love, warped by a judgemental society, becomes obsessive revenge, and that revenge creates new victims who are, like Kipps, condemned to relive the past. The novel's circular form, beginning and ending with Kipps as a haunted older man, mirrors the way obsession traps characters in an endless cycle from which there is no real escape.

26 Children are at the very centre of The Woman in Black. Susan Hill makes them the innocent victims of the haunting, the cause of Jennet Humfrye's madness, and the measure of the suffering that spreads through Crythin Gifford. Yet children also appear at the beginning and end of the novel as a source of warmth and hope, so that Hill uses them to explore both what adults most love and what they most fear to lose.

The children of Crythin Gifford are important because they show, before Kipps understands anything, that something is wrong in the town. On his first day he passes the school and is watched by the pupils, and the quotation "that row of small, solemn faces, with hands all gripping the railings" is unsettling. We would expect children in a playground to be noisy and carefree, but the adjective "solemn" makes them seem old and watchful, and "gripping the railings" suggests tension, almost as if they are imprisoned. Kipps remembers them as "a sudden vision", a word which links them to the ghostly visions he later experiences. Because Kipps first sees the woman in black at Mrs Drablow's funeral in this same small town, Hill quietly connects the children with the threat that hangs over them. Their seriousness may reflect a community that has learned that childhood

Question number

itself is dangerous here.

Hill makes children the targets of Jennet's revenge. Each time she is seen, a child dies "in some violent or dreadful circumstance", and this is why the adults dread her. This is deeply horrifying, because the Gothic genre often focuses on the corruption of innocence, and nothing is more innocent than a child. Mr Jerome's "shuttered expression" and his terror of going near Eel Marsh House are explained when Mr Daily reveals that Jerome lost a child himself. Through him Hill shows that the deaths are not abstract events but private grief carried by many families. The children are important, then, as the means by which Jennet makes others feel the loss she suffered.

The most important child is Nathaniel, whose short life is the root of everything. Because he was born outside marriage, Jennet was forced to give him up, and he was adopted by her sister Alice Drablow and her husband to avoid bringing shame on the family. In the period in which the novel is set, an unmarried mother, especially one from a respectable family, could be cut off entirely, and Hill uses Nathaniel to criticise a society that put reputation above love. The letters Kipps finds show that Jennet was eventually allowed to see her son, and that he grew "more and more attached" to her, sharing a "natural affinity" with his real mother. This bond creates a bitter rivalry between the sisters, and when Nathaniel is drowned on the marshes with his nursemaid and the driver of the pony and trap, Jennet blames Alice. The child is therefore important as the catalyst for Jennet's mental collapse and her transformation into the vengeful spectre.

The nursery at Eel Marsh House shows how deeply Nathaniel was loved. It is filled with "toys, so many toys", books and well-made clothes, and the bed is still made up as though he might come back. The wealth of the Drablows, who owned the

Question number

house, a farm and properties in the town, allowed them to employ a nursemaid, as was common in comfortable middle-class families at the turn of the century. Hill makes the room both tender and terrifying. The rocking chair moving by itself in the locked nursery suggests that Jennet still sits by her son's bed. The nursery is important because it turns the absence of a child into something Kipps can see and hear,.

Hill also uses the sound of a child to create terror. On the causeway, in the fog, Kipps hears the pony and trap sink into the marsh and a child crying out, sounds which he later realises are a repetition of Nathaniel's death. The fact that he can do nothing to help is agonising, and the horror depends on our instinct to protect children.

Kipps's own son, Joseph, gives the novel its devastating ending. Having seen the woman in black, Kipps returns to London, marries Stella and becomes a father, and for a moment the story seems to have escaped the curse. But when Kipps sees the woman again in the park, the pony and trap carrying Stella and Joseph crashes into a tree. Joseph is killed and Stella dies some months later. Hill withholds this until the very end, so that the inevitability of the curse strikes with full force: Jennet has had her revenge on the outsider who entered her house. Children here represent the future, and Kipps's future is destroyed.

However, children also frame the novel more hopefully. In the opening chapter, Kipps is surrounded by his stepchildren and their families on Christmas Eve, and he feels an "uprush of well-being" in their company. Their lively ghost stories, a Victorian Christmas tradition, contrast with his private distress. Although they are not his biological children, he is proud of them and even hopes one will follow his advice towards a career at the Bar. This suggests that love for children can partly

Question number

heal a life broken by loss.

Overall, Hill uses children to show both the fragility and the value of innocence. They are the victims through whom the haunting gains its cruelty, but they are also the source of the strongest love in the novel, and it is precisely because they matter so much that Jennet's revenge is so terrible.

27 Otis Gardiner is the dark heart of Coram Boy. Under his three identities, the pedlar Otis Gardiner, the "Coram Man" and the wealthy merchant Mr Gaddarn, Jamila Gavin embodies the greed and cruelty that eighteenth-century society allowed to flourish at the expense of its most vulnerable people. He is significant not only as the villain who drives the plot, but as a symbol of how the trade in human beings, from abandoned babies to enslaved Africans, could be dressed up as respectable business.

From his first appearance Otis is defined by money and talk. The opening description of him as a "pots man, Jack-of-all-trades and smooth-tongued entrepreneur" who "ranted non-stop" is significant because each label is about selling. "Jack-of-all-trades" suggests he will turn his hand to anything that pays, and "smooth-tongued" implies a persuasive, slippery charm that disguises his real intentions. The word "entrepreneur" is almost comic in this rural setting, but it hints at the modern, profit-driven world he will later conquer in London. Nothing is sacred to him, because everything can be traded.

His role as the Coram Man reveals the most horrifying side of this attitude. In the 1740s, unmarried mothers faced disgrace, and poverty meant many families could not feed another child. Thomas Coram had founded the Foundling Hospital in

Question number

London to care for such babies, and Gavin uses this real institution to expose how its good intentions could be exploited. Otis travels the countryside taking money from "desperate women" by promising to deliver their children to "the finest institution", where they will be cared for. In reality, babies are a burden to him because they bring no further profit, and he simply disposes of them. The instruction "Just dig a hole" is chilling in its casualness: the imperative and the plain monosyllables show that he feels no guilt at all. The older children, by contrast, are sold as labour to farms, mills and the navy, which shows that he values children only as goods. Through Otis, Gavin highlights the fate of children who were "abandoned, orphaned and unwanted" and suggests that an age which tolerated such trade shared some of his guilt. The secret burials are also deeply Gothic, turning the English countryside into a place of hidden horrors.

Otis is significant, too, because he exposes the corruption of respectable characters. Mrs Lynch, the Ashbrook housekeeper, works with him, and when Melissa secretly gives birth to Alexander's child, it is Otis who is paid to take the baby away. Mrs Milcote believes her grandson will be given a future, but Mrs Lynch knows what Otis is likely to do. Otis therefore links the grand house of Ashbrook with the ditches where babies are buried, suggesting that the polite world of the gentry depends on cruelty kept out of sight.

His treatment of his son Meshak reinforces his coldness. Meshak is simple and gentle, and Otis abuses him verbally and physically: "he flicked his whip across his back", as if he were driving an animal. He keeps Meshak only because he is useful, justifying it with the proverb "blood is thicker than water", which sounds like loyalty but really means ownership. Ironically, it is Meshak's tenderness that undermines his father: instead of burying Melissa's baby, he runs to the Coram Hospital and saves the child who becomes Aaron. Gavin contrasts the father's

Question number

greed with the son's instinctive love, so Otis is significant as the dark foil to the novel's most innocent character.

The most striking aspect of Otis is his ability to reinvent himself. After he is convicted of murder and blackmail, he escapes the gallows by blackmailing the magistrate so that another man is hanged in his place. He reappears in London as Mr Philip Gaddarn, a rich trader "speculating in the South Seas", importing luxury goods and trafficking slaves. This transformation is significant because it shows that, in Georgian England, wealth could buy a new identity and that the slave trade, an economic mainstay of cities such as London, made men powerful and respected. Gavin implies that the wealthy London merchant and the rural baby-killer are the same man: only the scale of his crimes has changed. Even his connection to the Coram Hospital continues, since it gives him access to children who are "destined for the harems of North Africa and Arabia". The hospital, which was a fashionable charity supported by figures like Handel and Hogarth, becomes, through him, another source of profit.

As Mr Gaddarn, his obsession with his "position in society" makes him even more dangerous. When Meshak recognises him, his reaction is to remove the threat entirely: "Sell them or throw them overboard". The cold choice between two forms of disposal echoes his treatment of the babies in Part One, showing that he has not changed at all. In the climax, when Alexander and Thomas discover his identity, Gaddarn's men attack them and Thomas is killed by the "murderous thrust" of his sword. This shows how far he will go to protect the false self he has built, and the death of the kind, musical Thomas is one of the novel's most painful losses.

Overall, Otis Gardiner is significant as the force that connects the novel's two

Question number

parts and its two great evils: the abandonment of unwanted children and the slave trade. Gavin uses his many names to suggest that evil can wear a respectable face, and that a society which values profit and reputation above human life creates men like him. When slavery was finally abolished in the British colonies in 1833, it was, in part, a rejection of the values he represents, so his exposure feels like a judgement on the whole age.

28 Secrets drive almost every event in Coram Boy. Jamila Gavin shows that in eighteenth-century England, where reputation and status mattered more than truth, people were forced to hide their love, their children and their crimes. Some secrets protect the innocent, but many more allow the powerful and the greedy to exploit them, so that the novel becomes a study of how a society built on concealment breeds cruelty.

The central secret is Melissa's pregnancy. Her relationship with Alexander Ashbrook has to be hidden because he is the heir of a wealthy family and she is the daughter of an impoverished widow, and when she discovers she is carrying his child she knows that exposure "could ruin" her completely. In the eighteenth century, a woman who became pregnant outside marriage brought disgrace on herself and her family, and her chances of marriage or respectability would be destroyed. At first only Isobel knows, which shows the trust between the two friends, but at the birth the circle widens. Mrs Lynch's remark "No one knows about the child except the four of us. Remarkably, the secret has been well kept" sounds reassuring, yet the reader is uneasy. The adverb "Remarkably" has an almost smug tone, and the fact that Mrs Lynch is one of the "four" warns us that the secret is now in dangerous hands. Gavin makes us realise that keeping a secret depends entirely on who shares it.

Question number

Indeed, Mrs Lynch turns the secret into a weapon. Because she knows about the baby, she is able to work with Otis Gardiner to make money out of Mrs Milcote's desperation. She claims the child will go to the Coram Hospital to be "apprenticed out" and "Given a future", but she knows that Otis is likely to kill him. Here secrecy is significant because it removes all accountability: no one can ask what happened to a baby whose existence was never acknowledged. Gavin suggests that the shame attached to illegitimacy did not protect morality at all, but created a hidden market in which such children could vanish.

Otis himself depends on secrets to run his business. His arrangement with Sarah Wood, the chief nurse at the Coram Hospital, allows him to bring babies in through "the back door instead of the front", and he pays her "a goodly sum" for her silence. The contrast between "back door" and "front" captures the hypocrisy of the whole system: the Foundling Hospital was a fashionable charity, publicly supported by figures such as Handel and Hogarth, yet behind its respectable facade corruption could operate. Gavin uses this real institution, founded by Thomas Coram for babies whose mothers could not care for them, to show the gap between public charity and private exploitation.

Alexander's secrets are more sympathetic. When his father, Sir William, insists that he leave the cathedral school and removes every instrument from Ashbrook House, music becomes forbidden. Sir William wants his son to be familiar with "the affairs of the state", reflecting the expectation that an eldest son of the gentry should manage land and politics rather than pursue art. Alexander's secret playing on the virginals at Waterside Cottage is an act of quiet rebellion, and it is there that his secret relationship with Melissa grows. Gavin presents this secret with some tenderness: it is a way of protecting the one part of himself his father

Question number

cannot control. Yet it also has consequences, because it leads to the pregnancy and, indirectly, to the loss of his son. Later, Alexander keeps his life in London secret from his family, which allows him to work with Handel and become a composer. Here secrecy is significant as a path to freedom for a young man trapped by duty.

Meshak's secret is the most moving in the novel. Ordered by his father to bury Melissa's baby, he instead carries the child to the Coram Hospital. He hides this from Otis at great personal risk, knowing the violence he could face. Meshak, who is mocked as simple, protects life precisely by keeping a secret, and the baby survives to become Aaron. Gavin turns the theme around here: the same silence that allows Otis to murder allows Meshak to save. The difference lies in the motive, greed in one case and love in the other.

Otis's final secret is his identity as Mr Gaddarn. Having escaped the gallows by blackmail, he reinvents himself as a rich London merchant involved in the slave trade, which was an economic mainstay of the city and made considerable fortunes for men like him. His new life depends on no one discovering who he really is, so when Meshak recognises him, he feels his "very existence" threatened. He orders that Meshak be shipped away and that Aaron and Toby never come back. This shows that secrets in the novel are linked to power: those who have status will destroy others to keep their pasts hidden.

Ultimately, the eventual revelation of the truth, including Aaron's real parentage, brings both justice and grief. Gavin suggests that secrets may sometimes be necessary for survival in a harsh, judgemental society, but that a culture which forces people to hide love and children also shelters men like Otis Gardiner. The importance of secrets, then, is that they reveal the moral failings of the age as

Question number

much as those of individual characters.

29 Dante Bridgeman is the narrator and emotional centre of Boys Don't Cry, and Malorie Blackman uses his journey from a self-absorbed teenager to a responsible young father to challenge assumptions about masculinity, young parenthood and family. His significance lies in the way he changes: through Dante, Blackman shows that being a "real man" means accepting responsibility and showing love, not hiding feeling.

At the start of the novel, Dante is significant as a picture of a bright young man whose future seems mapped out. At seventeen he is waiting for his A level results, which turn out to be four A-stars, and he plans to study at university so that he can "leave home and be independent" before becoming a journalist. His results represent everything his hard work has earned, and Blackman makes the reader share his excitement so that the arrival of Melanie with a baby feels like a shock to us as well as to him. The quotation "I was off to university in less than a month and there was no way I was going to let Melanie and some baby ruin my plans" reveals his initial attitude. The phrase "some baby" is dismissive, refusing even to name or recognise his daughter, and the possessive "my plans" shows how firmly he is focused on himself. Blackman does not make Dante a villain, though; his panic feels realistic, and his voice as a first-person narrator lets us understand his fear while also judging it.

His first reaction to Melanie exposes a self-centred and naive outlook. Rather than accepting that the child is his, he hints that she has slept with others, which she firmly denies: "I don't sleep around". He even asks "how come you didn't have an abortion?", a question that shows little awareness of the choices Melanie has

Question number

faced. Dante's assumption that childcare is a woman's problem reflects traditional ideas about gender roles, in which fathers could walk away while mothers were left to cope. When Melanie leaves Emma with him and does not return, Blackman reverses these roles. Dante is forced into the position usually given to young mothers, and through him the novel exposes how unfairly society has often judged them.

Dante is also significant in showing the relationship between parents and teenage children. He and his dad frequently clash, and after his results he complains that "nothing I ever did was good enough". This suggests a father who struggles to express pride, perhaps because he has been brought up to believe, as the title suggests, that men should not show emotion. Their relationship develops as Dante becomes a father himself. As he learns how hard parenting is, he begins to accept his dad's advice, and the help of Aunt Jackie and Veronica, rather than resenting it. The moment his dad tells him "I want you to know how proud I am of you" is significant because it is the praise Dante has been waiting for, given not for exam grades but for his growth as a person. Blackman suggests that love between men is strengthened, not weakened, when it is spoken aloud.

Dante's growth as a father is the clearest sign of his significance. Gradually he learns to feed, change and comfort Emma, and he stops seeing her as an obstacle. He gives up his university place and takes on the practical goal of finding "a decent job to support Emma". This represents a real sacrifice, and Blackman presents it honestly: the novel explores how emotionally and physically challenging it can be for young parents to give up education and a career. Yet his love for Emma is presented as something that enriches him rather than ruining his life, which directly contradicts his earlier fear.

Question number

Through Dante, Blackman also exposes the prejudice faced by young parents. When a woman in a shop assumes he is "not working and living off benefits", Dante realises how quickly people judge someone like him. The incident reflects stereotypes about young, single parents that were common in the media at the time the novel was written. Dante's anger at this unfair judgement shows how his perspective has widened: he now sees the world from the position of someone who is looked down upon.

His relationship with his younger brother Adam is equally important. At first Dante is dismissive of Adam's sexuality and suggests that he will "grow out of it", revealing a casual prejudice that he has never questioned. Yet when Adam is violently attacked by Josh, Dante's protectiveness is fierce. He wants revenge and is willing to risk losing Emma "to make him suffer", which shows that his old impulsive masculinity has not disappeared. Crucially, though, he stops himself: "I turned round and walked away". This short, decisive sentence marks a turning point, because Dante chooses responsibility to his daughter over violence. He also comes to see that Logan was the "one in the background pulling everyone's strings", showing a new maturity in reading people.

Overall, Dante is significant because he embodies the novel's message that masculinity can be redefined. Blackman uses him to show that young men can be loving, nurturing parents, and the Bridgeman household, a single-parent family of a father, his two sons and a baby girl, becomes a modern model of a family that copes by supporting one another. By the end, Dante has learned that boys can and should cry, and that real strength lies in caring for others.

30 In Boys Don't Cry, Malorie Blackman presents a wide spectrum of attitudes to

Question number

sexuality, from Adam's confident openness to the violent hatred of Josh and Logan. By placing these attitudes side by side within one family and one group of friends, Blackman suggests that prejudice is often rooted in fear and ignorance, and that acceptance is something people must learn. The novel also links sexuality to wider ideas about masculinity, showing how rigid expectations of what boys should be can damage everyone.

Adam is the character who is most secure in his sexuality. He is openly gay, flamboyant and witty, and Blackman presents him as unashamed of who he is. When Dante dismisses his sexuality as a phase that he will "grow out of", Adam turns the argument around by sarcastically asking whether Dante will grow out of his "heterosexual phase". This reversal is significant because it exposes how absurd it is to treat one sexuality as normal and another as temporary. Adam's confidence is shown most strikingly when Josh abuses him: rather than retaliating with violence, Adam kisses "Josh full on the lips". This is a defiant act, knowingly provocative, which challenges Josh's homophobia in public. Blackman's use of alternating chapters narrated by Adam allows readers to see his inner life directly, which encourages empathy and makes the later violence against him more painful.

Dante's attitude develops across the novel. At first he is not hostile, but he is dismissive, assuming that Adam is simply confused. This represents a casual, unthinking prejudice that many people might not even recognise in themselves. However, Dante's loyalty to his brother is strong. When Josh insults Adam in the restaurant, calling him a "queer son-of-a-bitch", Dante is angered by the bigotry, and after Adam is attacked he is determined that "Josh had to pay". Blackman shows Dante moving from tolerance to genuine understanding as he realises that Adam's sexuality is not a phase but part of his identity. His journey suggests that acceptance often begins with personal love before it becomes a principle.

Question number

Dad, Tyler Bridgeman, represents an older generation's struggle with sexuality. He finds it difficult to talk about emotional matters with his sons, partly because he holds traditional views about masculinity, the attitude summed up by the title that boys should not show weakness. Early on he seems uncomfortable with Adam's openness. Yet the quotation "Of course I know Adam is gay. I've come to terms with that" shows real progress. The phrase "come to terms" implies that acceptance has been a process, perhaps a difficult one, but the confident "Of course" suggests he no longer sees it as something to hide. After the attack, his contempt for the "homophobic scumbags" responsible shows that his protective love for his son has overcome any discomfort. Blackman uses Dad to suggest that older attitudes can change, and that fathers can be role models of acceptance.

Josh's attitude is the most complex and tragic. His apparent hatred of Adam, expressed in the vicious "You make my skin crawl", is revealed to be a mask for his own hidden sexuality. Josh fears he would lose all his "friends and family" if he came out, and his violence becomes a way of denying his feelings and proving his masculinity to others. Blackman suggests that internalised homophobia can be the most destructive kind, because it turns self-hatred outward. Josh is not excused, since his brutal attack leaves Adam seriously injured, but he is also a victim of a culture that makes being gay seem shameful. This reflects the real difficulties many young people face in coming to terms with their sexual identity, especially in peer groups where homophobic language is normalised.

Logan's attitude, by contrast, is presented as pure intolerance. He does not physically attack Adam, but his malicious encouragement manipulates Josh into doing so. Dante's realisation that "We'd all been played" shows how Logan's bigotry operates in the background, using others to carry out his hatred. Blackman

Question number

suggests that those who stir up prejudice are as guilty as those who act on it, which is especially relevant in a society where violence against LGBTQ+ people is now treated as a hate crime and can lead to custodial sentences.

The novel also explores attitudes to heterosexual relationships and gender. Dante's initial response to Melanie's announcement that Emma is his daughter is to blame her and to ask "How exactly was that my problem?" This exposes a double standard: Dante assumes that the consequences of sex are the woman's responsibility. Blackman reverses this by leaving Dante to raise Emma, showing that responsibility for sexual relationships belongs to both partners. Linking these different strands, the novel suggests that narrow expectations of male sexuality, whether heterosexual or gay, limit how men can behave.

Written in the early twenty-first century, after the repeal of Section 28 and at a time of growing legal equality for gay people, Boys Don't Cry reflects a society that was becoming more accepting yet where homophobic bullying remained common in schools and communities. Overall, Blackman presents attitudes to sexuality as a test of character. Those who learn to accept, like Dante and Dad, grow stronger as a family, while those who cling to fear and hatred, like Josh and Logan, cause terrible harm. Through Adam's courage, she argues that being true to oneself is a form of strength.