Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (9–1)

Monday 13 May 2024

Morning (Time: 2 hours)

Paper reference **4ET1/01**

English Literature

PAPER 1: Poetry and Modern Prose

Question Booklet
Do not return this Booklet with your Answer Booklet.

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Answer THREE questions:

Answer the question in Section A,
ONE question from Section B
and ONE question from Section C.

The poems for use with Section B are included with this paper.

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SECTION A

Unseen Poetry

Answer the question in this section.

You should spend 35 minutes on this question.

Read the following poem.

Unfinished Poem

Here is the tiny seed.
Drop it from your palm.
Cover it with earth.

Here is the tender shoot
breaking through warm soil.
Water it with love.

Here is the slender stalk
Moist with morning dew.
Shelter it with care.

Here is the velvet bud
folded in itself.
See its slow unfurling.

Here is the fragrant flower
Open to the bees.
Watch their happy visiting.

Here is the shrivelled pod
rattling in cold wind.
Wait for the shell to split.

Here is the tiny seed.

Barrie Wade (c.1989)

1 Explore how the writer presents nature in this poem.

In your answer, you should consider the writer's:

- descriptive skills
- choice of language
- use of form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poem.

(Total for Question 1 = 20 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 20 MARKS

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SECTION B

Anthology Poetry

Answer ONE question from this section.

You should spend 40 minutes on your chosen question.

EITHER

2 Re-read *Half-caste* and *Remember*.

Compare the ways the writers express their feelings in *Half-caste* and *Remember*.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(Total for Question 2 = 30 marks)

OR

3 Re-read *Half-past Two*.

Compare the ways the writers present being alone in *Half-past Two* and **one other** poem from the anthology.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(Total for Question 3 = 30 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 30 MARKS

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SECTION C

Modern Prose

Answer ONE question on ONE text from this section.

You should spend 45 minutes on this section.

***To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee**

EITHER

4 'You never really understand a person … until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.' (Atticus)

Discuss the theme of understanding others in the novel.

You must consider the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 4 = 40 marks)

OR

5 How is Calpurnia important in *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

You must consider the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 5 = 40 marks)

***Of Mice and Men*, John Steinbeck**

EITHER

6 Explore the significance of Curley in the novel.

You must consider the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 6 = 40 marks)

OR

7 In what ways is death important in *Of Mice and Men*?

You must consider the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 7 = 40 marks)

***The Whale Rider*, Witi Ihimaera**

EITHER

8 'Witi Ihimaera's daughters wanted to read a Maori novel that featured a female hero.'

In what ways can Kahu be considered a hero in *The Whale Rider*?

You must consider the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 8 = 40 marks)

OR

9 How is cultural identity important in the novel?

You must consider the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 9 = 40 marks)

***The Joy Luck Club*, Amy Tan**

EITHER

10 Discuss the importance of friendship in *The Joy Luck Club*.

You must consider the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 10 = 40 marks)

OR

11 'Most of the men in this novel are presented in a negative way. They are controlling and unkind.'

How far do you agree with this view?

You must consider the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 11 = 40 marks)

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***Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe**

EITHER

12 Examine the role of Chielo, the Priestess of Agbala, in the novel.

You must consider the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 12 = 40 marks)

OR

13 'Okonkwo is regretful, but he often hides his feelings.'

Discuss the theme of regret in *Things Fall Apart*.

You must consider the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 13 = 40 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION C = 40 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 90 MARKS

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Acknowledgement:

Unfinished Poem by Barrie Wade, *Read Me Out Loud*, Macmillan

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English Literature

PAPER 1: Poetry and Modern Prose

Poetry Booklet – Part 3 of the Edexcel Anthology

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If –

If you can keep your head when all about you
    Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
    But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
    Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
    And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream – and not make dreams your master;
    If you can think – and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
    And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
    Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
    And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
    And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
    And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
    To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
    Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
    Or walk with Kings – nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
    If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
    With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
    And – which is more – you'll be a Man, my son!

Rudyard Kipling

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Prayer Before Birth

I am not yet born; O hear me.
Let not the bloodsucking bat or the rat or the stoat or the
club-footed ghoul come near me.

I am not yet born, console me.
I fear that the human race may with tall walls wall me,
with strong drugs dope me, with wise lies lure me,
on black racks rack me, in blood-baths roll me.

I am not yet born; provide me
With water to dandle me, grass to grow for me, trees to talk
to me, sky to sing to me, birds and a white light
in the back of my mind to guide me.

I am not yet born; forgive me
For the sins that in me the world shall commit, my words
when they speak me, my thoughts when they think me,
my treason engendered by traitors beyond me,
my life when they murder by means of my
hands, my death when they live me.

I am not yet born; rehearse me
In the parts I must play and the cues I must take when
old men lecture me, bureaucrats hector me, mountains
frown at me, lovers laugh at me, the white
waves call me to folly and the desert calls
me to doom and the beggar refuses
my gift and my children curse me.

I am not yet born; O hear me,
Let not the man who is beast or who thinks he is God
come near me.

I am not yet born; O fill me
With strength against those who would freeze my
humanity, would dragoon me into a lethal automaton,
would make me a cog in a machine, a thing with
one face, a thing, and against all those
who would dissipate my entirety, would
blow me like thistledown hither and
thither or hither and thither
like water held in the
hands would spill me.

Let them not make me a stone and let them not spill me.
Otherwise kill me.

Louis MacNeice

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Blessing

The skin cracks like a pod.
There never is enough water.

Imagine the drip of it,
the small splash, echo
in a tin mug,
the voice of a kindly god.

Sometimes, the sudden rush
of fortune. The municipal pipe bursts,
silver crashes to the ground
and the flow has found
a roar of tongues. From the huts,
a congregation: every man woman
child for streets around
butts in, with pots,
brass, copper, aluminium,
plastic buckets,
frantic hands,

and naked children
screaming in the liquid sun,
their highlights polished to perfection,
flashing light,
as the blessing sings
over their small bones.

Imtiaz Dharker

Search For My Tongue

You ask me what I mean
by saying I have lost my tongue.
I ask you, what would you do
if you had two tongues in your mouth,
and lost the first one, the mother tongue,
and could not really know the other,
the foreign tongue.
You could not use them both together
even if you thought that way.
And if you lived in a place you had to
speak a foreign tongue,
your mother tongue would rot,
rot and die in your mouth
until you had to spit it out.
I thought I spit it out
but overnight while I dream,

મને હતું કે આબ્બી જીભ આખ્ખી ભાષા,

(munay hutoo kay aakhee jeebh aakhee bhasha)

મેં થૂંકી નાખી છે.

(may thoonky nakhi chay)

પરંતુ રાત્રે સ્વપ્નાંમાં મારી ભાષા પાછી આવે છે.

(parantoo rattray svupnama mari bhasha pachi aavay chay)

ફુલની જેમ મારી ભાષા મારી જીભ

(foolnee jaim mari bhasha mari jeebh)

મોઢામાં ખીલે છે.
(modhama kheelay chay)

ફુલની જેમ મારી ભાષા મારી જીભ

(fulllnee jaim mari bhasha mari jeebh)

મોઢામાં પાકે છે.
(modhama pakay chay)

it grows back, a stump of a shoot
grows longer, grows moist, grows strong veins,
it ties the other tongue in knots,
the bud opens, the bud opens in my mouth,
it pushes the other tongue aside.
Everytime I think I've forgotten,
I think I've lost the mother tongue,
it blossoms out of my mouth.

Sujata Bhatt

Half-past Two

Once upon a schooltime
He did Something Very Wrong
(I forget what it was).

And She said he'd done
Something Very Wrong, and must
Stay in the school-room till half-past two.

(Being cross, she'd forgotten
She hadn't taught him Time.
He was too scared of being wicked to remind her.)

He knew a lot of time: he knew
Gettinguptime, timeyouwereofftime,
Timetogohomenowtime, TVtime,

Timeformykisstime (that was Grantime).
All the important times he knew,
But not half-past two.

He knew the clockface, the little eyes
And two long legs for walking,
But he couldn't click its language,

So he waited, beyond onceupona,
Out of reach of all the timefors,
And knew he'd escaped for ever

Into the smell of old chrysanthemums on Her desk,
Into the silent noise his hangnail made,
Into the air outside the window, into ever.

And then, *My goodness*, she said,
Scuttling in, *I forgot all about you*.
Run along or you'll be late.

So she slotted him back into schooltime,
And he got home in time for teatime,
Nexttime, notimeforthatnowtime,

But he never forgot how once by not knowing time,
He escaped into the clockless land of ever,
Where time hides tick-less waiting to be born.

U A Fanthorpe

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Piano

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;
Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings
And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song
Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong
To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside
And hymns in the cosy parlour, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour
With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour
Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast
Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the past.

D H Lawrence

Hide and Seek

Call out. Call loud: 'I'm ready! Come and find me!'
The sacks in the toolshed smell like the seaside.
They'll never find you in this salty dark,
But be careful that your feet aren't sticking out.
Wiser not to risk another shout.
The floor is cold. They'll probably be searching
The bushes near the swing. Whatever happens
You mustn't sneeze when they come prowling in.
And here they are, whispering at the door;
You've never heard them sound so hushed before.
Don't breathe. Don't move. Stay dumb. Hide in your blindness.
They're moving closer, someone stumbles, mutters;
Their words and laughter scuffle, and they're gone.
But don't come out just yet; they'll try the lane
And then the greenhouse and back here again.
They must be thinking that you're very clever,
Getting more puzzled as they search all over.
It seems a long time since they went away.
Your legs are stiff, the cold bites through your coat;
The dark damp smell of sand moves in your throat.
It's time to let them know that you're the winner.
Push off the sacks. Uncurl and stretch. That's better!
Out of the shed and call to them: 'I've won!
Here I am! Come and own up I've caught you!'
The darkening garden watches. Nothing stirs.
The bushes hold their breath; the sun is gone.
Yes, here you are. But where are they who sought you?

Vernon Scannell

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Sonnet 116 'Let me not to the marriage…'

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments; love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no, it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

William Shakespeare

La Belle Dame sans Merci. A Ballad

I

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
    Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
    And no birds sing.

II

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
    So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
    And the harvest's done.

III

I see a lily on thy brow,
    With anguish moist and fever-dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
    Fast withereth too.

IV

I met a Lady in the meads,
    Full beautiful – a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
    And her eyes were wild.

V

I made a garland for her head,
    And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
    And made sweet moan.

VI

I set her on my pacing steed,
    And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
    A faery's song.

VII

She found me roots of relish sweet,
    And honey wild, and manna*-dew,
And sure in language strange she said –
    'I love thee true'.

VIII

She took me to her elfin grot,
    And there she wept and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
    With kisses four.

IX

And there she lullèd me asleep
    And there I dreamed – Ah! woe betide! –
The latest dream I ever dreamt
    On the cold hill side.

X

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
    Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried – 'La Belle Dame sans Merci
    Thee hath in thrall!'

XI

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
    With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
    On the cold hill's side.

XII

And this is why I sojourn here
    Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
    And no birds sing.

John Keats

**manna* – Food from heaven

Poem at Thirty-Nine

How I miss my father.
I wish he had not been
so tired
when I was
born.

Writing deposit slips and checks
I think of him.
He taught me how.
This is the form,
he must have said:
the way it is done.
I learned to see
bits of paper
as a way
to escape
the life he knew
and even in high school
had a savings
account.

He taught me
that telling the truth
did not always mean
a beating;
though many of my truths
must have grieved him
before the end.

How I miss my father!
He cooked like a person
dancing
in a yoga meditation
and craved the voluptuous
sharing
of good food.

Now I look and cook just like him:
my brain light;
tossing this and that
into the pot;
seasoning none of my life
the same way twice; happy to feed
whoever strays my way.

He would have grown
to admire
the woman I've become:
cooking, writing, chopping wood,
staring into the fire.

Alice Walker

War Photographer

In his darkroom he is finally alone
with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows.
The only light is red and softly glows,
as though this were a church and he
a priest preparing to intone a Mass*.
Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh. All flesh is grass.

He has a job to do. Solutions slop in trays
beneath his hands, which did not tremble then
though seem to now. Rural England. Home again
to ordinary pain which simple weather can dispel,
to fields which don't explode beneath the feet
of running children in a nightmare heat.

Something is happening. A stranger's features
faintly start to twist before his eyes,
a half-formed ghost. He remembers the cries
of this man's wife, how he sought approval
without words to do what someone must
and how the blood stained into foreign dust.

A hundred agonies in black and white
from which his editor will pick out five or six
for Sunday's supplement**. The reader's eyeballs prick
with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers.
From the aeroplane he stares impassively at where
he earns his living and they do not care.

Carol Ann Duffy

**Mass* – A religious service
***Sunday's supplement* – A regular additional section placed in a Sunday newspaper

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The Tyger

Tyger, Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?*

Tyger, Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

William Blake

**Did he who made the Lamb make thee* – God*

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My Last Duchess
Ferrara

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
'Frà Pandolf' by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, 'Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much,' or 'Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat': such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart – how shall I say? – too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace – all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men, – good! but thanked
Somehow – I know not how – as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech – (which I have not) – to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, 'Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark' – and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
– E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

Robert Browning

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Half-caste

Excuse me
standing on one leg
I'm half-caste

Explain yuself
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste
yu mean when picasso
mix red an green
is a half-caste canvas/
explain yuself
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste
yu mean when light an shadow
mix in de sky
is a half-caste weather/
well in dat case
england weather
nearly always half-caste
in fact some o dem cloud
half-caste till dem overcast
so spiteful dem dont want de sun pass
ah rass/
explain yuself
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste
yu mean when tchaikovsky
sit down at dah piano
an mix a black key
wid a white key
is a half-caste symphony/

Explain yuself
wha yu mean
Ah listening to yu wid de keen
half of mih ear
Ah lookin at yu wid de keen
half of mih eye
and when I'm introduced to yu
I'm sure you'll understand
why I offer yu half-a-hand
an when I sleep at night
I close half-a-eye
consequently when I dream
I dream half-a-dream
an when moon begin to glow
I half-caste human being
cast half-a-shadow
but yu must come back tomorrow
wid de whole of yu eye
an de whole of yu ear
an de whole of yu mind
an I will tell yu
de other half
of my story

John Agard

Do not go gentle into that good night

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Dylan Thomas

Remember

Remember me when I am gone away,
    Gone far away into the silent land;
    When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
    You tell me of our future that you planned:
    Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
    And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
    For if the darkness and corruption leave
    A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
    Than that you should remember and be sad.

Christina Rossetti

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Search For My Tongue, Sujata Bhatt, Carcanet Books
Half-past Two © U A Fanthorpe. First published in Neck-Verse (Peterloo Poets, 1992)
Piano by D H Lawrence from *The Top 500 Poems,* ed William Harmon, Columbia University
Hide and Seek, Vernon Scannell, Faber and Faber 2011
Sonnet 116 – Shakespeare's Sonnets – 1999, © Shakespeare, Penguin Classic, William Shakespeare, 1609
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My Last Duchess – 2000, © Robert Browning, Penguin Classic, Robert Browning, 1842
Half-caste by John Agard. Source: 'Half-caste', John Agard, Hodder Children's Books, 2005
Do not go gentle into that good night by Dylan Thomas from *Selected Poems: Dylan Thomas* (Penguin Classic, 2000), Dylan Thomas, 1951
Remember by Christina Rossetti from *Selected Poems: Rossetti* (Penguin Classic, 2008), Christina Rossetti, 1862

Please check the examination details below before entering your candidate information

Candidate surname	Other names

Centre Number | Candidate Number

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (9–1)

Monday 13 May 2024

Morning (Time: 2 hours)

Paper reference **4ET1/01**

English Literature

PAPER 1: Poetry and Modern Prose
Answer Booklet

You must have:
Question Booklet and Poetry Booklet from Part 3 of the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology (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 from Section A, **ONE** question from Section B and **ONE** question from Section C.
- Answer the questions in the spaces provided
  – *there may be more space than you need.*

Information

- The total mark for this paper is 90.
- The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets
  – *use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question.*
- Copies of the texts studied may **not** be brought into the examination.
- Dictionaries may **not** be used in this examination.

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

Unseen Poetry

Question 1

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(Total for Question 1 = 20 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 20 MARKS

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SECTION B

Anthology Poetry

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 2** ☒ **Question 3** ☒

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TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 30 MARKS

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SECTION C

Modern Prose

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

Question 7 ☒ **Question 8** ☒ **Question 9** ☒

Question 10 ☒ **Question 11** ☒ **Question 12** ☒

Question 13 ☒

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TOTAL FOR SECTION C = 40 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 90 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

1

Wade presents nature as a fragile, beautiful and endlessly renewing cycle, something that needs human tenderness but is never fully under human control. The poem reads almost like a set of gardening instructions, yet its gentle commands slowly reveal a larger truth: life, growth and decay are part of one movement that has no true ending, which is why the poem is "Unfinished".

The title is the first clue to this idea. It could suggest that the poet has simply not completed his work, but by the final line the reader realises that the poem cannot be finished because nature itself never finishes. The structure enacts this. Six tercets trace the plant from "tiny seed" to "shrivelled pod", and then a single line stands alone: "Here is the tiny seed." Repeating the opening line exactly returns us to the start, so the shape of the poem becomes a circle. The isolated final line feels like both an ending and a fresh beginning.

Wade's descriptive skill lies in tracing growth through precise, sensory adjectives. The "tender shoot" is vulnerable, yet it is "breaking through warm soil", and the forceful verb "breaking" hints at the quiet strength inside something delicate. The "slender stalk" and the "velvet bud" appeal to sight and touch, suggesting elegance and a softness the reader almost wants to stroke. The bud "folded in itself" seems protective, even shy, and the sibilance of "See its slow unfurling" stretches the line out, so that the reader experiences the patience that nature requires. The "fragrant flower / Open to the bees" marks the climax of the cycle, with smell now added to the senses, and "happy visiting" personifies the bees, presenting nature as a joyful, cooperative community.

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The language then darkens. "Shrivelled" is the first harsh adjective in the poem, and the onomatopoeic "rattling in cold wind" replaces the earlier "warm soil" and "morning dew" with the sounds of autumn. The contrast between warmth and cold charts the turning of the seasons. Yet even here decay is not tragic: "Wait for the shell to split" contains the promise of new seeds, so death becomes the doorway to rebirth.

The anaphora of "Here is the" opens every stanza, as if someone is presenting each stage to us like a gift. The third line of each tercet is always an imperative, "Cover it", "Water it with love", "Shelter it with care", which gives the poem a calm, ritual rhythm. These commands could be addressed to a child, and the reader may notice how closely the language of gardening echoes the language of parenting: "love" and "care" are not horticultural words but human ones. Perhaps Wade suggests that nurturing nature is a moral duty, much like raising a child. Interestingly, the verbs change as the poem goes on, from active jobs such as "Drop" and "Water" to passive ones such as "See", "Watch" and "Wait". Humans can plant and protect, but in the end they can only observe while nature does its own work.

Overall, the interrelationship of the cyclical form, the repeated stanza pattern and the shift from soft to harsh sounds presents nature as orderly, precious and eternal. The poem is "Unfinished" because the reader is left holding the tiny seed, ready to begin again.

2 Both Agard and Rossetti speak directly to a listener in order to change how that person thinks, but the feelings they express could hardly be more different. Agard's speaker is indignant, mocking and defiant, demanding respect for a whole identity that the word "half-caste" insults. Rossetti's speaker is tender, sorrowful and

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finally selfless, asking to be remembered yet releasing her lover from grief. One poem turns anger outwards at a society; the other turns love inwards towards a single, private relationship.

Each poem announces its feeling in its first words. Agard begins with the mock politeness of "Excuse me / standing on one leg / I'm half-caste", an absurd image that already ridicules the idea that a person of mixed heritage is somehow incomplete. The polite phrase is heavy with sarcasm, and the imperative "Explain yuself" quickly replaces it, putting the listener on trial. Rossetti also opens with an imperative, "Remember me when I am gone away", but hers is a plea rather than a challenge. The gentle repetition of "gone away, / Gone far away" lengthens the distance between the lovers and creates a tone of quiet sadness, while the euphemism "the silent land" softens death, perhaps to protect the listener from the harshness of her meaning. Both poets therefore use commands, but Agard's are confrontational and Rossetti's are intimate.

Language choice is central to how each speaker expresses feeling. Agard writes in Caribbean Creole with phonetic spellings such as "wha yu mean" and "well in dat case", which makes the voice sound spoken, lively and proud. By refusing standard English, he refuses the authority of the person who uses the label, so the form itself becomes an act of resistance. Rossetti, by contrast, writes in formal, measured standard English. Her feelings are restrained and controlled, as if she is carefully arranging her thoughts before death. The contrast is striking: Agard's anger spills over linguistic rules, while Rossetti's grief is contained within them.

Both poets use comparison and imagery, though to very different ends. Agard builds a series of analogies drawn from high culture and nature: "picasso / mix red an green", "light an shadow / mix in de sky" and "tchaikovsky" mixing "a black key

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/ wid a white key". Each example shows that mixing creates art and beauty, so the speaker's frustration is expressed through witty logic that makes the label look foolish. The pun "half-caste till dem overcast" and the exclamation "ah rass" add humour and exasperation. Rossetti's imagery is gentler and more physical: "When you can no more hold me by the hand" captures the loss of touch, and "Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay" beautifully dramatises her reluctance to leave. Interestingly, Rossetti also uses the word "half", but where her "half turn" expresses loving hesitation, Agard's repeated "half" is turned against his listener.

Form shapes feeling in both poems. Remember is a Petrarchan sonnet, the traditional form of love poetry, and its regular rhyme and iambic rhythm give a sense of order and composure. The octave focuses on remembering, but the volta at "Yet if you should forget me for a while" shifts the feeling from longing to generosity. The final couplet, "Better by far you should forget and smile / Than that you should remember and be sad", resolves the poem with a paradox: a poem titled Remember ends by permitting forgetting. Her deepest feeling is not a wish to be remembered but a wish for her lover's happiness. Half-caste, in contrast, is written in free verse, with no capital letters for names and forward slashes instead of full stops. This looser form suits a speaker who will not be confined by other people's categories.

Structurally, both poems build to a turn. Agard's second half shifts from mocking examples to himself, with absurd images of offering "half-a-hand" and casting "half-a-shadow", exaggerating the insult until it collapses. The refrain "Explain yuself" gives way to a final invitation: the listener must return "wid de whole of yu eye", "de whole of yu ear" and "de whole of yu mind". The repetition of "whole" reverses the poem's earlier "half", and his feeling moves from anger to a challenge that is almost hopeful. He will tell "de other half / of my story", but only to

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someone willing to listen properly. Rossetti's turn is also towards the listener's wellbeing, but it is an act of letting go rather than demanding attention.

In conclusion, both poets express strong feelings through direct address, imperatives, repetition and a structural turn. Yet Agard's feelings are public, political and fiercely defiant, expressed through humour and a voice that breaks conventions, whereas Rossetti's are private, loving and resigned, expressed through the controlled elegance of the sonnet. Each poem ends by asking the listener to change: Agard asks for a whole mind, Rossetti for a smile.

3 Fanthorpe's Half-past Two and Scannell's Hide and Seek both present a child who is left alone and whose sense of time and reality shifts while waiting. Yet the experiences lead in opposite directions. Fanthorpe's boy is forgotten but discovers a magical, timeless freedom he treasures forever, whereas Scannell's child chooses to hide, waits proudly for victory, and finally finds himself abandoned. Being alone is presented as liberation in one poem and as an unsettling betrayal in the other.

Both poems begin by placing the child in a situation controlled by others. Half-past Two opens with the fairy-tale formula "Once upon a schooltime", which immediately frames the experience as a story and hints at the childish, imaginative perspective to come. The boy is alone because he has done "Something Very Wrong", and the capitalisation mimics the way an adult's scolding sounds enormous to a child. The parenthesis "(I forget what it was)" adds an adult voice looking back, which creates gentle humour but also suggests how trivial the crime was compared with the experience it caused. Hide and Seek, in contrast, opens with the child's own confident commands, "Call out. Call loud", and an exclamation full of excitement. Being alone here begins as a chosen game, not a punishment,

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and the short imperative sentences convey eagerness.

The two poets use voice differently to present isolation. Fanthorpe writes in the third person, with the boy referred to only as "he", which places a slight distance between the reader and the child and lets the adult narrator observe his innocence fondly. Scannell uses second-person address throughout: "They'll never find you in this salty dark". The "you" could be the child talking to himself, or the adult poet remembering, and it draws the reader into the hiding place so that we share the child's suspense. Being alone in Hide and Seek is therefore more claustrophobic and immediate.

Sensory imagery shows how solitude sharpens each child's perception. Fanthorpe's boy escapes "Into the smell of old chrysanthemums on Her desk, / Into the silent noise his hangnail made". The oxymoron "silent noise" captures how, alone in a quiet room, the tiniest sensations become huge, and the anaphora of "Into" across three lines enacts his drift further and further away from the classroom into "ever". Scannell's child also notices smells and sensations: the sacks "smell like the seaside", and the alliterative "dark damp smell of sand" seems to choke him as it "moves in your throat". However, while Fanthorpe's sensory details feel dreamy and peaceful, Scannell's become physically uncomfortable: "Your legs are stiff, the cold bites through your coat". The verb "bites" personifies the cold as an attacker, suggesting that solitude is beginning to hurt.

Time is central to both poems. Fanthorpe uses compound words such as "Gettinguptime" and "Timetogohomenowtime" to show that the boy understands time only through the rhythm of his daily life and the people he loves, as in "Timeformykisstime". Left alone and unable to "click its language", he slips "Out of reach of all the timefors". Being alone frees him from adult structures. In

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Scannell's poem, time also stretches: "It seems a long time since they went away." The simple, flat statement creates foreboding, because the reader senses before the child does that the others are not coming back.

The endings reveal the sharpest contrast. In Half-past Two the teacher bursts back, "Scuttling in", and the verb makes her seem comic and insect-like. She "slotted him back into schooltime", as though he were a piece in a machine, yet the final lines insist that "he never forgot" the "clockless land of ever". Being alone becomes a precious, almost mystical memory, and the poem closes on the gentle image of time hiding "tick-less waiting to be born". Hide and Seek builds instead to a cruel anticlimax. The child bursts out with "I've won!", but "The darkening garden watches. Nothing stirs." Personification makes nature itself a silent witness, and "The bushes hold their breath" echoes the child's earlier "Don't breathe". The final question, "But where are they who sought you?", leaves him utterly alone. Some readers interpret this as a metaphor for growing up and discovering that the world does not always reward us, or even for the loneliness of death.

Structurally, Fanthorpe's short tercets, with their varied line lengths and playful enjambment, give shape to the boy's wandering imagination, while Scannell's single unbroken block of verse, with its loose rhyme and frequent caesurae, creates a tense, breathless continuity in which there is no escape. Overall, both poets show solitude transforming a child's sense of time and space, but Fanthorpe presents being alone as a doorway into wonder, whereas Scannell presents it as a lesson in isolation and disappointment.

4 Atticus's advice to Scout is the moral heart of To Kill a Mockingbird. Harper Lee

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presents understanding others not as a single lesson but as a slow, difficult process through which Scout and Jem grow from innocence towards maturity. At the same time, she shows a town that largely refuses to make this imaginative leap, so the failure to understand others becomes the root of the prejudice, cruelty and injustice of 1930s Maycomb. Writing in 1960, as the Civil Rights Movement gathered pace, Lee seems to ask her American readers to climb into the skin of those their society had judged.

Atticus first offers his advice after Scout's disastrous first day at school, and the context is important. Miss Caroline, who is new to Maycomb, misunderstands Walter Cunningham when he refuses her quarter, not realising that the Cunninghams are proud farmers who never take what they cannot pay back. The Cunninghams represent the rural poor of the Great Depression, and Lee shows that even well-meaning outsiders can humiliate people through ignorance. Scout herself fails the test the same day when she mocks Walter for pouring syrup over his food. Calpurnia's angry reminder that a guest must be treated as company, whatever his manners, teaches Scout that understanding others means setting aside her own sense of what is normal. The clearest arc of understanding concerns Boo Radley. At the start of the novel, the children see him through Maycomb gossip as a "malevolent phantom", and Jem's lurid description of a creature who eats raw squirrels shows how fear fills the space where knowledge should be. Yet Boo's gifts in the knothole, the blanket placed around Scout's shoulders on the night of Miss Maudie's fire and the mended trousers left for Jem gradually reveal a shy, kind man. After the trial, Jem begins to grasp why Boo might prefer to stay inside, a sign that he now understands Maycomb's cruelty well enough to sympathise with someone who hides from it. The climax comes when Scout stands on the Radley porch and sees the street from Boo's point of view, and Lee's language deliberately echoes Atticus's lesson. Her final reflection that "Atticus was

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right" closes the circle.

Lee also shows that understanding requires seeing past appearances. Jem despises Mrs Dubose for insulting Atticus, but after her death Atticus reveals that she was fighting a morphine addiction and calls her the bravest person he ever knew. Jem's anger turns to confusion and then respect, and the white camellia she leaves him becomes a symbol of the complexity of people he has judged too quickly. Similarly, Dolphus Raymond pretends to be a drunkard, when his bag holds only Coca-Cola, because Maycomb would rather invent a story than understand why a white man chooses to live among the black community.

The trial of Tom Robinson presents the most tragic failure of understanding. Atticus asks the jury to look beyond the colour of Tom's skin, yet the verdict shows that the town's racial assumptions are stronger than evidence. The Jim Crow laws of the segregated South, and real cases such as the Scottsboro Boys trials of the early 1930s, where black men were convicted on the flimsiest testimony, give this verdict its bitter realism. Strikingly, the one moment in court when someone does climb into another's skin is punished. When Tom admits that he felt sorry for Mayella, the courtroom turns against him, because a black man pitying a white woman disrupts the racial hierarchy. Lee suggests that in Maycomb, empathy itself can be dangerous when it crosses the colour line.

Scout, however, learns from the trial. She comes to see Mayella as perhaps the loneliest person in the world, trapped between the white community who despise the Ewells as "trash" and the black community she cannot associate with. Her understanding does not excuse Mayella's lie, but it explains it, and this is exactly the kind of moral imagination Atticus hoped to teach. Jem's response is more painful. His tears after the verdict show that understanding the injustice of the

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adult world can be a loss of innocence as well as a gain in wisdom.

Lee also uses irony to show how shallow some adults' understanding is. At Aunt Alexandra's missionary circle, Mrs Merriweather weeps for the Mrunas in Africa while complaining about the black servants of Maycomb, and at school Miss Gates condemns Hitler's persecution of the Jews while Scout remembers hearing her speak cruelly about black people after the trial. These scenes satirise a respectable white society which can sympathise with suffering far away but not with the people beside it. For readers in 1960, the year of the Greensboro sit-ins, this hypocrisy would have felt uncomfortably current.

The first-person narration is itself a method of understanding others. The adult Scout looks back on her younger self, so we see both the child's misjudgements and the grown woman's wiser perspective. The mockingbird symbol reinforces the theme: Tom and Boo are innocents who do no harm, and to "kill a mockingbird" is to destroy someone because you never tried to understand them. When Scout agrees that exposing Boo would be like shooting a mockingbird, she shows that she has truly learned Atticus's lesson.

In conclusion, Lee presents understanding others as a moral choice that requires imagination, humility and courage. The children slowly acquire it through Atticus, Calpurnia and their own experiences, while much of Maycomb refuses it, with devastating results for Tom Robinson. Atticus's closing remark that most people are nice "when you finally see them" offers hope, but the word "finally" reminds us how long and hard that journey can be.

5 Calpurnia is important in To Kill a Mockingbird because she occupies a position no

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other character can: she is both inside and outside the Finch family, a mother figure to Scout and Jem and a respected member of Maycomb's black community. Through her, Harper Lee shows the children a moral education rooted in discipline and respect, and she reveals the divided world of the segregated South. Calpurnia is the bridge between two communities that the novel's 1930s setting keeps rigidly apart, and her presence quietly challenges the racial assumptions of the white characters around her.

At first, Scout sees Calpurnia simply as an enemy. She describes their battles as "epic and one-sided" and recalls her "tyrannical presence" for as long as she can remember. The exaggerated, mock-heroic language is comic, but it also tells us something important: in the motherless Finch household, Calpurnia holds real authority, and Atticus always supports her. For a black woman working as a cook in the Deep South of the 1930s, where Jim Crow laws placed black people firmly below white people, this authority over white children is striking. Lee makes it clear that within the Finch home, Calpurnia's judgement matters more than the colour of her skin.

Calpurnia's importance as a moral teacher is clearest in the Walter Cunningham episode. When Scout criticises Walter for drowning his food in syrup, Calpurnia takes her into the kitchen and furiously tells her that a guest must be treated with respect, however he behaves at the table. She also points out that Scout's family being better off than the Cunninghams counts for nothing if she disgraces them with bad manners. This lesson anticipates Atticus's advice about climbing into another person's skin, and it shows that Scout's moral education comes from Calpurnia as much as from her father. In the context of the Great Depression, when farming families like the Cunninghams were desperately poor, Calpurnia's insistence on dignity for Walter suggests a deeper understanding of class and pride

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than Scout possesses.

Lee balances this strictness with tenderness. When Scout returns home after her miserable first day at school, Calpurnia makes her crackling bread and admits that she missed her, a small gesture that shows her love for the children. Earlier, she taught Scout to write by setting her to copy passages from the Bible, so Scout's literacy, which so offends Miss Caroline, comes partly from Calpurnia. Her care is also practical and brave: when the rabid dog Tim Johnson appears in the street, it is Calpurnia who telephones the neighbours and runs to warn the Radley house, crossing a threshold that the whole town fears.

Perhaps the most important chapter for Calpurnia is the visit to First Purchase Church. Here, the children see her in her own world for the first time. When Lula objects to white children being brought to a black church, Calpurnia firmly defends them as her company, and the rest of the congregation welcome them warmly. Scout is astonished to hear Calpurnia speak differently with her own people, and Calpurnia explains that it would be out of place to talk like white people at church, just as it would be odd for her to speak like her neighbours in the Finch kitchen. This "modest double life" opens Scout's eyes to the fact that Calpurnia has an identity beyond serving the Finches. Lee uses this to show how black people in the segregated South had to move constantly between two worlds, adapting their language to survive in each. The scene also reveals the inequality of education: Calpurnia is one of only a few people in the congregation who can read, and she taught her son Zeebo from a law book. Through her, Lee exposes how segregation deprived black communities of opportunity.

Calpurnia's role also tests the attitudes of the white characters. Aunt Alexandra wants her dismissed and forbids Scout from visiting Calpurnia's house, revealing

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her belief in a strict social hierarchy. Atticus refuses, calling Calpurnia a faithful member of the family and insisting that the children love her. At the missionary tea, Alexandra's friends grumble about their black servants in the very house where Calpurnia works, which shows how invisible black women could be to respectable white society.

Calpurnia is also important to the novel's treatment of the trial. She brings the news to the courthouse that the children are missing, and she is the person Atticus takes with him when he goes to tell Helen Robinson that Tom has been killed. This detail suggests that Atticus understands he cannot enter the black community alone in a moment of grief; he needs Calpurnia as a trusted link. She is therefore essential to the novel's exploration of racial injustice, carrying information and empathy across a line that most white characters never cross.

Some modern readers argue that Calpurnia is not fully developed, since we see her almost entirely through Scout's eyes and mainly in relation to the white family she serves. This criticism is worth considering, and it may reflect the limits of a white author writing in 1960. Yet Lee does give her moments of independence, dignity and strength that push against the stereotype of the loyal servant, especially at First Purchase.

In conclusion, Calpurnia is important as a mother figure, a moral teacher and a bridge between black and white Maycomb. She shapes Scout's sense of right and wrong and reveals to the children the hidden lives of the black community. Through her, Lee shows both the possibility of love and respect across racial lines and the deep injustice of a society that kept those lines in place.

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6

Curley is significant in Of Mice and Men because he embodies the way power works in the ranch world of the Great Depression: it is inherited rather than earned, it is insecure, and it is used to bully those who are weaker. Small, aggressive and jealous, he is in many ways a pathetic figure, yet Steinbeck makes him dangerous because his position as the boss's son allows him to threaten the livelihoods and even the lives of the men around him. He also drives the plot, since his hostility towards Lennie, his neglect of his wife and his hunger for revenge all push the novel towards its tragic ending.

Steinbeck establishes Curley's significance through his first appearance. He is introduced as a "thin young man with a brown face" and a "head of tightly curled hair", and like his father he wears "high-heeled boots", a detail that separates him from the working men and marks him as part of the ranch's ruling family. His body language is instantly threatening. He glances "coldly" at the newcomers, his "hands closed into fists" and he goes "into a slight crouch", the stance of a boxer preparing to fight. The narrator calls his look "calculating and pugnacious", and his demand that Lennie answer for himself is a deliberate attempt to provoke.

Candy's gossip deepens this impression and also foreshadows events. He explains that Curley is "handy" as a boxer and that, "like a lot of little guys", he "hates big guys". This tells the reader that conflict with Lennie is inevitable. Curley's aggression seems to come from insecurity: he is physically small in a world where men's worth is measured by strength and work, and he compensates by picking fights he believes he can win. Candy also reveals that Curley is "cockier'n ever" since his marriage and wears a "glove fulla vaseline" to keep his hand soft for his wife. The detail is both crude and comic, and it suggests that Curley performs his masculinity rather than possessing genuine authority.

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In the social context of the 1930s ranch, Curley's power is real, even if his character is weak. The itinerant workers move from ranch to ranch with no security, and any of them could be "canned" if they offend the boss's family. The ranch functions as a microcosm of American society during the Depression, in which wealth and position protect a few while the majority live in fear of losing their work. Steinbeck seems to suggest, through Curley, that such a system rewards the wrong people, and the ideas of Social Darwinism, the belief that the strongest naturally rise to the top, are exposed as hollow when the man at the top is so plainly unworthy.

Steinbeck emphasises this by contrasting Curley with Slim. Slim moves with "a majesty" and is called the "prince of the ranch"; his authority is earned through skill and calm judgement. When Curley storms in looking for his wife and accuses Slim, he is forced to back down and apologise, and Carlson mocks him as "yella as a frog belly". Humiliated, Curley turns on Lennie, who is innocently smiling at the thought of the farm. This scene is pivotal. Curley punches Lennie repeatedly while Lennie bleats in terror, until George finally orders him to fight back. Lennie crushes Curley's hand, and Steinbeck's simile of Curley "flopping like a fish on a line" reverses the power dynamic completely. Yet the scene also shows how power operates: Slim persuades Curley to say his hand was "caught in a machine" by threatening to make him a laughing stock. Curley's public image matters more to him than truth.

Curley's marriage is also significant. He treats his wife as a possession rather than a partner, and Steinbeck never gives her a name, so that she is defined only as Curley's property. He is constantly searching for her, not out of love but out of jealousy, and the novel implies that, even as a newly married man, he joins the others on their Saturday night in town. This reflects the period's attitudes, in

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which women had few rights and the men's Saturday-night visits to places like Susy's were accepted as normal. When Curley's wife confides in Lennie, she says that Curley "ain't a nice fella" and reveals that she married him only after her hopes of Hollywood seemed to disappear. Curley's neglect is therefore part of the reason she is lonely and seeks company in the barn, which leads to her death.

Curley's response to that death is perhaps the most revealing moment of all. Instead of grief, he shows rage and a thirst for revenge. He immediately organises a posse and declares that he will shoot Lennie in the guts, choosing the most painful death possible. Steinbeck contrasts this with George's merciful shot to the back of Lennie's head. Curley's lynch mob reflects the rough justice of 1930s rural America, where mob violence and lynching were sadly common, and it recalls the men who chased George and Lennie out of Weed. In the final scene, Curley stands with Carlson, untouched by the grief that Slim and George share, and it is Carlson who wonders what is "eatin'" them, a question neither man could answer.

In conclusion, Curley is significant as both a character and a symbol. As a character, he is a bully whose insecurity triggers the conflict with Lennie and contributes to the deaths that end the novel. As a symbol, he represents the abuse of inherited power, the objectification of women and the cruelty of a society that values strength over compassion. Steinbeck makes him a small man in every sense, yet one who has a terrible capacity to destroy the lives of others.

7 Death is central to Of Mice and Men. Steinbeck builds the novel as a chain of deaths that grow steadily in significance, from a mouse in George's hand to Lennie himself, so that each death foreshadows the next and the tragic ending feels inevitable. Yet death in the novel is not only physical. Alongside the killing of

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animals and people, Steinbeck shows the death of hope, of companionship and of the American Dream itself, revealing a Depression-era world in which the weak are destroyed and the dreams that keep men going are crushed.

The first death occurs before the story has properly begun. Lennie has been carrying a dead mouse in his pocket, petting it so hard that he has killed it, and George throws it away. George's blunt remark, "That mouse ain't fresh", introduces a pattern: Lennie loves soft things but cannot control his strength, and what he loves dies. The mouse seems trivial, but it is the first link in a structural chain. The title itself, borrowed from Burns's poem about a mouse whose nest is destroyed and the idea that the best-laid plans of mice and men often go wrong, signals from the start that this is a story in which plans and lives will be ruined.

The death of Candy's dog is perhaps the most important foreshadowing in the novel. The dog is old, blind and smelly, and Carlson insists it should be shot. Steinbeck makes the scene painful: Candy lies on his bunk staring at the ceiling while the silence stretches until the shot is heard. Slim's support for Carlson shows how far the ranch accepts that the useless must be eliminated. This reflects the brutal logic of the Great Depression, often associated with Social Darwinism, in which only the strong and productive survive. Candy, himself old and disabled after losing his hand in a ranch accident, fears that he will be treated the same way once he can no longer work. Later he tells George that he wishes he had shot the dog himself instead of letting a stranger do it, and this regret directly shapes George's decision at the end of the novel.

Lennie's killing of the puppy in the barn marks another step up the chain. Steinbeck shows Lennie talking to its body with childlike bewilderment, protesting "I didn't bounce you hard". The pathos of the scene lies in his innocence: he does

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not intend harm, but his strength makes him a danger to everything fragile.

The death of Curley's wife is the novel's turning point. She confides her lost dream of being in the movies, a dream shared by many young women in 1930s America, when Hollywood promised an escape from poverty and loneliness. When Lennie strokes her hair and panics as she screams, he breaks her neck. Steinbeck's description of her afterwards is strikingly gentle: in death the discontent leaves her face and she looks "sweet and young". The irony is bitter. Only in death does she escape the loneliness of her marriage to Curley and the judgement of the men who call her a tart. The moment is also suspended in time, as Steinbeck describes the sound and movement in the barn slowing and stopping, as if the world itself pauses at the destruction of the dream.

Her death also kills the dream of the farm. Candy, who had offered his savings so that he could share the plan with George and Lennie, realises at once that it is over, and his angry words to her body show his devastation. George admits that he always suspected they would never achieve it. Crooks had earlier observed that countless men came through with the same dream of land and none ever got it, and now his cynicism is proved right. Steinbeck suggests that for the migrant workers of the Depression, the American Dream was an illusion, a hope that sustained them only until reality destroyed it.

The final death, Lennie's, is the climax towards which everything has led. Steinbeck returns to the pool by the Salinas River from the opening chapter, creating a circular structure, but the peace of that first scene is gone. A heron seizes a water snake and swallows it, a natural killing that mirrors the death about to take place. George comforts Lennie by telling him about the rabbits one last time, then shoots him in the back of the head with Carlson's Luger, the same

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gun used on Candy's dog. George has learned from Candy that it is better to end the suffering of someone you love yourself than to leave it to strangers. With Curley's lynch mob closing in, and with no provision for people with learning disabilities in 1930s America beyond the cruelty of institutions, George's act becomes one of mercy. Lennie dies happy, looking towards an imagined future.

Yet this death is also George's spiritual death. Without Lennie, he faces the lonely life of the itinerant worker, spending his wages in town like the others. Slim alone understands, telling him he had to do it, while Carlson cannot see what is troubling him. The novel ends not with a sense of resolution but with the death of the friendship that had set George and Lennie apart.

In conclusion, death is important in Of Mice and Men because it structures the narrative, builds tension through foreshadowing and expresses Steinbeck's view of a harsh society in which the weak, the old and the vulnerable are destroyed. The deaths of the mouse, the dog, the puppy, Curley's wife and Lennie are matched by the death of dreams, leaving the reader with a powerful sense of loss and of the fragility of hope in Depression-era America.

8 Kahu can be considered a hero in every sense that The Whale Rider values: she is brave, loyal and spiritually gifted, and in the climax she saves both the bull whale and her people. Yet Ihimaera makes her heroism unusual. She is not a warrior who wins by force, but a small girl whose greatest battle is to be accepted by the great-grandfather who rejects her because of her gender. By writing a female hero into a story shaped by the legend of a male ancestor, Ihimaera answers his daughters' wish for a Maori heroine and challenges the idea that leadership belongs only to men.

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From the very beginning, Ihimaera marks Kahu out as heroic through her name. She is named after Kahutia Te Rangi, the ancestor who rode a whale to Whangara, and Koro Apirana is furious that a girl should carry such a name. The naming works almost as a prophecy, and because the novel belongs to the genre of magical realism, the reader is encouraged to accept that the past is alive in the present. The burial of her birth cord on the marae, carried out by Nanny Flowers and Rawiri while Koro refuses to take part, reinforces this. The good omen that follows, with Rawiri believing he sees a small spear flying through the air while a whale sounds in the distance, links Kahu to the spears of life brought by the ancestor. Even as a baby she is quietly being written into the heroic tradition that Koro wants to keep for boys.

Part of what makes Kahu a hero is her endurance in the face of rejection. Koro's coldness towards her is painful, yet she loves him unconditionally. Ihimaera shows this through small, tender details, such as the baby Kahu biting Koro's big toe, an image that is comic but also suggests she is literally attaching herself to the tribe's leader. Her heroism here is emotional rather than physical: she keeps offering love to someone who refuses to return it. In the context of Maori society, where the role of women had become more restricted under British influence in the nineteenth century, Kahu's patience can be read as a quiet resistance to an inherited prejudice that Koro mistakes for tradition.

Kahu also proves her worth through learning. She excels at Maori language and culture and performs at a school ceremony, reciting her whakapapa with confidence. Koro does not come, and Nanny Flowers explains, "We tried to bolster her courage by clapping loudly". The verb "bolster" reveals how fragile she feels without his approval, yet she carries on and dedicates her success to him. This

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moment is significant because it shows that Kahu is the true inheritor of the knowledge Koro is desperate to pass on. When Koro sets up classes for the boys and banishes her, she listens secretly, so her learning is itself an act of courage. Ihimaera writes this against the background of the Maori cultural renaissance of the 1970s and 1980s, when language nests and schools fought to keep te reo alive, and Kahu becomes a symbol of a new generation reclaiming its heritage.

The episode of the carved stone is the clearest test of heroism in the novel, and Ihimaera deliberately borrows the shape of an ancient quest. Koro throws the stone into the sea and challenges the boys to retrieve it, but none can. Kahu dives for it and returns with it, while Rawiri and Nanny Flowers keep the secret. The fact that she communicates with dolphins and sea creatures suggests that her power is spiritual, a gift of oneness with nature rather than mere strength. Ironically, she passes the very test that Koro designed to find a male leader, which exposes the arbitrary nature of his gender rules.

The climax confirms Kahu as a hero on a mythic scale. When the herd strands itself on the beach, the tribe tries and fails to return the bull whale to the sea, and Koro believes, as the legend says, that if the whale dies the tribe will die with it. It is Kahu who walks into the water, climbs onto the whale and speaks to it, offering herself so that the tribe might live. Her willingness to sacrifice herself makes her heroism almost Christ-like, but it is also deeply rooted in Maori belief, since she is re-enacting Paikea's ride in reverse, going out to sea instead of arriving from it. The structure of the novel, which weaves the whale's own sections through the human story, makes this union feel destined: the old whale has been waiting for a rider since the ancestor's death.

Ihimaera does not let the reader forget the cost. Kahu is lost at sea and later

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found and taken to hospital, where Koro finally accepts her as his heir. This resolution suggests that Kahu's greatest achievement is not only saving the whale but transforming her great-grandfather. A tradition that had become rigid is renewed by the very person it excluded.

Kahu is therefore a hero in the traditional sense of courage and sacrifice, but Ihimaera also redefines heroism as love, persistence and connection with nature. Writing in 1987, when Maori identity was being reasserted across New Zealand, he gives his daughters, and readers everywhere, a heroine who proves that a culture is strongest when it includes all of its people.

9 Cultural identity is the beating heart of The Whale Rider. Ihimaera presents Maori identity as something sacred and inherited, rooted in ancestors, land, sea and language, but also as something under threat, both from the modern world outside Whangara and from the rigid way Koro Apirana tries to protect it. The novel suggests that a culture survives not by freezing itself in the past, but by allowing new generations, including girls like Kahu, to carry it forward.

Ihimaera roots the tribe's identity in the legend of Kahutia Te Rangi, or Paikea, who escaped drowning by riding a whale to Whangara and brought with him the spears of life. This myth is not presented as a distant story but as the living foundation of who the people are. The tribe believes that the life of the bull whale is bound to their own, and Koro states this bluntly: "When it dies, we die. I die". The short, increasingly personal sentences narrow from the tribe to Koro himself, suggesting that he sees his own identity and the survival of his people as completely intertwined. In the context of Ngati Porou belief, the bond between ancestor, animal and community is real, and the novel's use of magical realism

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asks the reader to accept it on those terms.

The novel shows that this identity is expressed through ritual. The burial of Kahu's birth cord on the marae, "in sight of Kahutia Te Rangi", connects her physically to the land and spiritually to the carved ancestor on the meeting house. Koro's refusal to take part reveals the tension at the centre of the story. For him, cultural identity is bound to a male line of chiefs, so a girl cannot inherit it. Ihimaera, writing at a time when the place of Maori women in tradition was being debated, suggests that Koro has confused one version of tradition with the whole of Maori culture.

Language is another key part of cultural identity. Koro's classes for the boys and the language nests, the Kohanga Reo, reflect the real movement of the 1980s to revive te reo Maori, which had been suppressed for generations in schools. Ihimaera scatters Maori words such as marae, whakapapa and taniwha through the English narrative without always explaining them, which asserts that Maori language belongs in literature and asks the reader to meet the culture on its own terms. The repeated chant "Hui e, haumi e, taiki e", meaning let it be done, works as a motif of unity, binding the past and present together and expressing the ideal of oneness between people and nature.

Ihimaera also explores how fragile cultural identity becomes in a modern, global world. Koro resists outside influence, even while other tribes are embracing "new challenges and the new technology". This shows his fear that change will dissolve what makes the tribe distinct. Rawiri's journey to Australia and Papua New Guinea broadens this theme. Away from home he experiences prejudice and sees how indigenous people elsewhere struggle, and his eventual return to Whangara suggests that identity is something one has to come home to. As narrator, Rawiri also gives

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the history of the tribe, explaining how the "first of the Ancients and ancestors had come from the east", which places the people within a long Polynesian voyaging tradition that gives them pride and continuity.

The whale's own sections deepen the theme by giving nature a voice. The old bull whale remembers his rider with longing and grieves at the damage humans have done to the ocean, such as pollution and the killing of whales. By shifting into the whale's perspective, Ihimaera implies that Maori identity includes a relationship with the natural world, and that the modern loss of this harmony is a loss of identity too. The stranding of the herd on the beach becomes a symbol of a culture in crisis.

Women, Ihimaera insists, have always been part of this identity. Nanny Flowers proudly traces her descent from strong ancestors such as Muriwai, who acted with authority when men could not, and she often outwits and challenges Koro. Through her, Ihimaera reminds the reader that Maori history already contains powerful women, so Kahu's rise is not a break from tradition but a return to a fuller version of it.

Kahu herself embodies the future of the tribe's identity. She learns the language eagerly, recites her whakapapa at school, retrieves the carved stone from the sea and, in the climax, rides the bull whale back into the ocean, re-enacting the founding legend. Her name, her birth cord and her bond with sea creatures all prepare for this moment. When Koro finally accepts her, the tribe's cultural identity is renewed rather than destroyed.

Published in 1987, during the Maori cultural renaissance, The Whale Rider presents cultural identity as precious, spiritual and worth fighting for. Yet its final message

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is hopeful and progressive: identity endures when it adapts, and the strongest guardian of tradition may be the person tradition once refused to see.

10 Friendship is the foundation of The Joy Luck Club, both literally and structurally. The club itself is a circle of friends, and the novel's sixteen stories are held together by the four mothers who meet to play mah jong. Tan presents friendship as a lifeline for women who have lost homes, families and languages, yet she also shows that friendships can be competitive, wounding and complicated. In the end, the novel suggests that friendship, like the bond between mothers and daughters, is a way of keeping memory alive.

The origins of the club reveal how vital friendship is for survival. In Kweilin during the war with Japan, Suyuan Woo gathers three other women to play mah jong, eat what food they can find and tell good stories, refusing to wait passively for death. The name itself, joy luck, is an act of defiance, as if friendship can create hope where none exists. When Suyuan arrives in San Francisco, she founds the club again with An-mei Hsu, Lindo Jong and Ying-ying St. Clair. For immigrant women in 1940s and 1950s America, isolated by language and often by their marriages, the club becomes a substitute family and a place where Chinese identity can be shared. Tan herself drew on her mother's stories of wartime China, and the friendship of the aunties reflects the way Chinese immigrant communities supported one another in an unfamiliar culture.

The novel opens with the importance of this friendship after death. Jing-mei is asked to take her mother's place, to be the fourth corner at the mah jong table, and the image of the empty seat at the east, where things begin, suggests both loss and continuation. The aunties' greatest gift of friendship is revealed when

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they tell Jing-mei that her half-sisters, whom Suyuan was forced to abandon while fleeing, are alive, and they give her money to travel to China to meet them. Their loyalty to Suyuan outlasts her life: they want her hope fulfilled. Yet Tan adds an uncomfortable irony. Jing-mei realises that the aunties fear their own daughters, like her, have forgotten what their mothers' stories mean. Friendship here carries a responsibility to remember.

Tan also shows how friendships can begin almost by chance and change a whole life. Lindo, newly arrived in America, works in a fortune cookie factory where she befriends An-mei, who introduces her to Tin Jong. Because Lindo and Tin speak different dialects, they communicate in simple English, and An-mei suggests using the fortunes from the cookies to send messages. The scene is gently comic, but it shows that a friend's practical help allows Lindo to build a new future. The image of fortune cookies, an American invention presented as Chinese, also hints at the mixed identity of these immigrant lives.

However, Tan refuses to present friendship as purely comforting. Suyuan and Lindo are friends but also rivals, constantly comparing their daughters, Jing-mei's piano and Waverly's chess. This rivalry is passed on to the next generation. Jing-mei grows up resenting Waverly, and in adulthood Waverly's sharp comments about Jing-mei's copywriting at the New Year dinner humiliate her. Tan suggests that the mothers' competitive pride, perhaps a product of the pressure on immigrants to prove that sacrifice had been worthwhile, can damage the friendships it is meant to celebrate. Nevertheless, a fragile understanding grows between the daughters, which mirrors the mothers' mixture of affection and competition.

Friendship between the daughters often functions as a mirror, helping them see themselves. Rose, for example, challenges Lena when she blames her background

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for her eating disorder, asking, "Why do you blame your culture, your ethnicity?" The question is blunt but caring, showing that a friend can puncture self-pity. Similarly, Waverly's friend Marlene Ferber points out the irony that Waverly can stand up to the tax authorities yet is terrified of her own mother. Rose tells different friends different versions of her separation from Ted, which suggests that friendship also allows characters to try out identities and feelings they cannot yet admit to themselves. Through these exchanges Tan explores the second generation's struggle to balance Chinese and American expectations.

Structurally, the novel itself resembles a mah jong game, with four sections and four players' stories turning in a circle. This form suggests that no single narrator holds the whole truth; meaning only emerges when the stories are shared, as in a gathering of friends. The parables at the start of each section reinforce this sense of communal storytelling passed between women.

The ending brings the friendship of the club to its fulfilment. Jing-mei travels to China with her father, Canning, and meets her sisters, and she sees that together they look like their mother. This reunion is made possible by the aunties' friendship, which bridges continents and generations. Tan, writing in 1989 when Chinese American voices were rarely heard in mainstream fiction, presents friendship as the force that preserves women's stories, heals divisions and allows identity to be passed on. Friendship in the novel is imperfect and sometimes painful, but it is ultimately what lets joy and luck survive loss.

11 I largely agree that most of the men in The Joy Luck Club are presented negatively, as controlling, unkind or, at the very least, unable to understand the women they live with. However, Tan's portrayal is more nuanced than the

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statement suggests. Some men, such as Canning Woo and Rich Shields, are kind, and even the cruel men are often shown to be products of the societies that shaped them. Crucially, every male character is seen only through the eyes of mothers and daughters, so the novel is less a study of men than a study of how women experience male power.

The men of the mothers' pasts in China are the most clearly negative. Lindo's first husband, Huang Tyan-yu, is a spoiled boy in a marriage arranged when they were children. He treats Lindo with indifference and contempt, and their marriage is never consummated, yet it is Lindo who is blamed for producing no grandchild. Tan suggests that he is less a villain than a symbol of a system in which a girl was traded to another family and expected to obey. Lindo's escape, achieved by inventing a dream about the family's ancestors, shows that her intelligence can defeat a world built for male authority.

The most disturbing man is Wu Tsing, the wealthy merchant who rapes An-mei's mother and so forces her to become his concubine. His power is total: he can buy women, and he can destroy their reputations. An-mei later compares him and Ted Jordan to magpies who feed on the suffering of others, a striking image of greed. Yet Tan complicates him too. Wu Tsing is weak and easily manipulated by Second Wife, and after An-mei's mother takes her own life, he is so afraid of her ghost that he promises to raise An-mei as an honoured daughter. His cruelty is real, but so is his cowardice, and the women's revenge shows that his control is never complete. In the context of 1920s China, where concubinage was legal and widows were expected not to remarry, Tan shows a society in which men's power was protected by tradition.

Ying-ying's first husband is similarly unkind. He is vulgar and unfaithful, and he

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abandons her for another woman while she is pregnant, leading her to end the pregnancy. Ying-ying becomes a ghost of herself, and Tan uses this to explain the passive, haunted mother Lena grows up with.

In America, the men are less violent but still controlling, often in subtler ways. Clifford St. Clair loves Ying-ying, but he renames her Betty on the immigration papers and records her birth date incorrectly, which alters her zodiac sign. He also puts his own words into her mouth, translating what he assumes she means. His kindness is genuine, yet it erases her voice and identity, which perhaps reflects how American culture absorbed and rewrote immigrant lives. Lena's husband, Harold Livotny, insists on splitting every bill equally, even ice cream that Lena does not eat. He believes this makes them equal partners, but it actually leaves Lena feeling worthless. Tan presents Harold's control as cold rather than cruel, a kind of emotional accounting. Ted Jordan, Rose's husband, first rescues her and then grows tired of her inability to make decisions, deciding to divorce her and keep the house. Ironically, it is Rose's eventual refusal to give in that surprises him, showing how much he expected her to remain passive.

However, Tan offers important exceptions. Canning Woo is gentle, loyal and patient. After Suyuan's death he travels with Jing-mei to China and tells her the full story of how Suyuan was forced to abandon her twin daughters, helping Jing-mei understand her mother. Rich Shields loves Waverly openly and unconditionally. His clumsy behaviour at dinner with Lindo, such as criticising her cooking without realising she was fishing for compliments, is comic rather than cruel, and he shows respect for Waverly's past and her daughter, Shoshana. Even Tin Jong, though a minor figure, is presented warmly in his awkward courtship of Lindo through fortune cookie messages. Other men, such as the old man who teaches Waverly chess in the park, are positive figures who support the daughters'

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talents.

The context of the novel also explains the imbalance. When it was published in 1989, some Asian American critics, including the writer Frank Chin, argued that Tan reinforced Western stereotypes of Chinese men as cruel or weak. Yet the negative American husbands suggest that Tan is not targeting Chinese men specifically; she is exploring patriarchy in both cultures. The mothers were raised in a male-dominated society to be silent, and the daughters, despite American freedom, still struggle to assert themselves. Tan's purpose seems to be to show women finding their voices, so the men inevitably appear as the obstacles to that process.

Overall, I agree that most of the men are controlling or unkind, especially those in pre-revolutionary China. However, Tan's portrayal is not simply hostile. The positive figures of Canning and Rich, and the human weaknesses behind men like Wu Tsing and Clifford, suggest that Tan's real target is not men themselves but the systems of power and silence that shaped both men and women. Because the stories belong entirely to the women, the men are seen through hurt, memory and misunderstanding, and this partial perspective is exactly what makes their presentation so revealing.

12 Chielo, the Priestess of Agbala, plays a small but powerful role in Things Fall Apart. She embodies the spiritual authority at the heart of Igbo society, she reveals a softer side of Okonkwo that he usually hides, and she shows that women in Umuofia could hold real power, even in a culture that values masculine strength above all else. Achebe uses her to present Igbo religion as complex and serious, challenging the colonial view that African belief was merely primitive superstition.

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Achebe first establishes the authority of the priestess through Okonkwo's memory of his father. When Unoka consults the Oracle of the Hills and the Caves about his poor harvests, the priestess at the time, Chika, tells him bluntly, "Go home and work like a man". Placing this episode early in the novel shows that the Oracle speaks with a voice that even men must accept, and it is also cruelly ironic, because the priestess articulates the very contempt for weakness that drives Okonkwo. The Oracle is presented as central to the life of the clan, since it is consulted before wars and in times of trouble, and Achebe based it on the real Awka Oracle, which was destroyed by the British in the early twentieth century. The role Chielo inherits is therefore one of genuine political and spiritual importance.

What makes Chielo fascinating is her double identity. In everyday life she is an ordinary woman, a widow with children, who sits with Ekwefi in the market and is her close friend. She is especially fond of Ezinma, whom she calls "my daughter". Achebe presents this warmth naturally, through small domestic exchanges, so that the reader sees her as a human being rather than a remote religious figure. Some readers suggest that her affection for Ezinma hints that Ezinma may one day follow her as priestess, while others link it to the fact that Ezinma is believed to be an ogbanje, a child who repeatedly dies and returns, so the Oracle's interest in her is both protective and dangerous.

When Chielo is possessed by Agbala, however, she becomes terrifying. The scene in which she arrives at Okonkwo's compound at night, calling out that Agbala wants to see his daughter, is one of the most dramatic in the novel. Okonkwo, who fears no man, pleads with her to wait until morning, but Chielo warns him not to speak when a god speaks. This is a striking reversal: the most powerful man in the

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village is silenced by a woman. Achebe shows that in Igbo culture spiritual authority could override gender, and that Okonkwo, for all his aggression, respects the gods. The fact that Ekwefi knows she risks a curse by following Chielo shows how seriously her role is taken.

Achebe builds suspense in this episode through the journey itself. Chielo carries Ezinma on her back and travels through all nine villages of Umuofia in the darkness before entering the cave. Her repeated chanting and the eerie descriptions of the night create a sense of mystery, and Ekwefi's fear grows as she stumbles after them. Achebe narrates much of the scene through Ekwefi's perspective, so the reader shares her terror and her devotion as a mother. The portrayal of Chielo here is deliberately ambiguous: she is frightening, but she is also carrying out a ritual which may cleanse and protect Ezinma.

Perhaps Chielo's most important role is to expose Okonkwo's hidden tenderness. He follows Ekwefi to the cave, pretending he is not anxious, and returns to the entrance again and again until he finds her waiting. This is a rare moment where the reader sees how deeply he cares for his wife and daughter, and it softens the image of the man who killed Ikemefuna. Achebe suggests that Okonkwo's love is real but buried beneath his fear of seeming weak, and through Chielo's actions it briefly surfaces. The scene ends with Chielo returning Ezinma home safely in the morning, and Okonkwo and Ekwefi's quiet reunion recalls their youthful love.

Chielo also reflects the changes that come with colonisation. In Part Two, when the missionaries win their first converts in Umuofia, Chielo dismisses the converts as the excrement of the clan, showing that the traditional religion sees Christianity as a threat. Her contempt foreshadows the conflict that will eventually tear the community apart. Achebe, writing in 1958 shortly before

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Nigerian independence, was responding to novels such as Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness, which presented Africa as a place without culture. Through figures like Chielo, he shows that Igbo society had a sophisticated religious system, with rituals, priests and a moral order.

Overall, Chielo is a minor character with a major function. She embodies the authority of the gods, she proves that women could wield power in Umuofia, and she draws out Okonkwo's buried humanity. Above all, she helps Achebe achieve his purpose of presenting Igbo culture with dignity and complexity, showing a world that was rich and ordered long before the arrival of the white men who claimed to bring it civilisation.

13 Regret runs through Things Fall Apart like an undercurrent, and the statement is accurate: Okonkwo often feels regret, but he hides it because to show it would be to appear weak, like his father, Unoka. Achebe presents a man whose greatest fear is not failure but the appearance of softness, and this suppression of regret becomes part of his tragedy. On a wider level, the novel is filled with a larger regret for the loss of a whole way of life, as Igbo society begins to fall apart under colonial rule.

The root of Okonkwo's emotional suppression lies in his childhood. Unoka was a debtor and a gentle musician whom the clan considered a failure, and when he consulted the Oracle he was told to "Go home and work like a man". Achebe tells us that Okonkwo's whole life is ruled by the fear of resembling him. This explains why he cannot admit regret: in his mind, any feeling except anger is womanly. Achebe, writing in 1958, presents this not as a flaw of Igbo culture as a whole but as Okonkwo's personal distortion of its values, since many other men in Umuofia,

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such as Obierika, are both respected and reflective.

The first clear example of regret comes during the Week of Peace, when Okonkwo beats his youngest wife, Ojiugo, because she has gone to plait her hair and failed to cook his meal. Breaking the sacred week is an offence against Ani, the earth goddess, and the priest Ezeani demands a sacrifice. Achebe notes that Okonkwo is inwardly repentant, but he will not go about telling his neighbours that he was in error. The narrator's commentary exposes the gap between Okonkwo's private feelings and his public mask, and the clan judges him harshly because he seems not to care. This episode shows how important collective religious law is in the village, and how Okonkwo's pride isolates him even when he is sorry.

The killing of Ikemefuna is the turning point for this theme. Ogbuefi Ezeudu has warned Okonkwo not to take part, because the boy calls him father. Yet when Ikemefuna runs to him crying "My father, they have killed me!", Okonkwo kills him himself, because, as Achebe writes, he was afraid of being thought weak. The simple, flat narration makes the moment horribly direct. Afterwards, Okonkwo cannot eat for two days, drinks palm-wine from morning till night and cannot sleep. He even asks himself when he became a shivering old woman, rebuking himself for his own grief. Here Achebe shows regret fighting against pride: Okonkwo's body betrays the sorrow his words deny. The Oracle's decree that the boy must die reminds the reader that religious belief was central to Igbo life, but Obierika's comment that the act will not please the earth suggests that obedience can be taken too far, and that the clan itself contains voices of doubt.

Regret also shapes Okonkwo's relationship with his son. Nwoye loved Ikemefuna, and something gives way inside him when he realises his friend has been killed. Later, Nwoye's conversion to Christianity feels to Okonkwo like a devastating

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judgement. He sees it as a disgrace, and he wonders how he could have produced such a son, comparing Nwoye unfavourably with Ezinma, whom he often wishes had been a boy. His regret here is twisted into anger and shame, which shows how incapable he is of acknowledging his own part in driving Nwoye away.

Exile deepens Okonkwo's regret. After his gun accidentally explodes at Ezeudu's funeral and kills Ezeudu's son, he must flee to his motherland, Mbanta, for seven years. Achebe describes these as "seven wasted and weary years", and tells us that "he regretted every day of his exile". This is one of the few places where his regret is stated openly, yet it is directed at his loss of status rather than at the deaths he has caused. He believes the people of Mbanta are less "warlike" than his own clan, which reveals that his values remain unchanged. Uchendu's speech about why a mother's land is a refuge offers Okonkwo wisdom about sorrow and comfort, but he does not truly absorb it.

When Okonkwo returns to Umuofia, his regret becomes a lament for his society. The white men have established a church, a court and a government, and the clan has not driven them out. Obierika tells him it is too late, because the white man has put a knife on the things that held the clan together, and it has fallen apart. This echoes the title, taken from Yeats's poem The Second Coming, and shows that the regret is now collective. Achebe presents the arrival of colonial rule as a loss of unity, symbolised even in small changes, such as the missionaries' instruction to "Come every seventh day", which quietly replaces the Igbo four-day week with a Christian calendar.

At the end, Okonkwo's suppressed feelings erupt into violence. He kills the court messenger, realises that the clan will not go to war, and takes his own life. Obierika's furious words that the District Commissioner's men drove him to it, and

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that he will now be buried like a dog, express the regret Okonkwo himself could never voice. The final irony, the Commissioner planning a book called The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger, reduces Okonkwo's tragedy to a paragraph.

Achebe therefore presents regret as both personal and historical. Okonkwo hides his regret behind pride, and this makes him rigid and ultimately self-destructive. Yet Achebe, writing as Nigeria approached independence, ensures that the reader feels the regret Okonkwo cannot express: regret for a proud man, and for a complex civilisation that was misunderstood and broken.