Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (9–1)

Monday 06 November 2023

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.

An Owl Flew in my Bedroom Once

My attic bedroom had two windows –
One that opened high above the street
And a skylight – a tile of thick glass
Like a see-through slate*.
And through it fell the moonlight
Coring the darkness like an apple-peeler.
Suddenly in that long cylinder of light
Appeared the owl, mysterious and grey
In that cold moon.
He flew in silently – a piece of night adrift –
Escaped. He circled, didn't settle
On the banister or rail.
There was no rattle of his talons,
No gripe or stomp*
To make him solid with their sound,
He simply floated in – turned wide – and floated out ...
In the morning there was nothing
No down* or limy dropping*
Nothing to prove he'd ever been at all.

An owl flew in my bedroom once, I think.

Jan Dean

Glossary

**slate* – a type of roofing material
**No gripe or stomp* – no sounds made
**down* – fine feathers
**limy dropping* – bird mess

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1 Explore how the writer presents the speaker's memory of an event 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 *Sonnet 116* and *My Last Duchess*.

Compare how the writers present their thoughts about relationships in *Sonnet 116* and *My Last Duchess*.

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 *Do not go gentle into that good night*.

Compare the ways the writers present emotions in *Do not go gentle into that good night* 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 How is Mayella Ewell important in the novel?

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

(Total for Question 4 = 40 marks)

OR

5 Explore the theme of prejudice 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 In what ways is Lennie significant in *Of Mice and Men*?

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

(Total for Question 6 = 40 marks)

OR

7 Discuss the importance of settings in the novel.

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

(Total for Question 7 = 40 marks)

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

EITHER

8 'Travelling to different places is experienced by some of the characters and the whales.'

Explore the significance of travelling 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 Nanny (Nani) Flowers presented 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 'America was where all my mother's hopes lay. She had come here in 1949 after losing everything in China ... she never looked back with regret.' (Jing-mei Woo)

Explore the theme of hopes and dreams in the novel.

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

(Total for Question 10 = 40 marks)

OR

11 In what ways is Lindo Jong important in *The Joy Luck Club*?

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 Explore tragic events in *Things Fall Apart*.

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

(Total for Question 12 = 40 marks)

OR

13 'Okonkwo was ruled by one passion – to hate everything that his father Unoka had loved. One of those things was gentleness and another was idleness.'

Discuss the character of Unoka and his effect on others in the novel.

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:

An Owl Flew in my Bedroom Once by Jan Dean, *Read Me 2*, 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

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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

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
La Belle Dame sans Merci – 2007, © John Keats, Penguin Classic, John Keats, 1819
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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 06 November 2023

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

Jan Dean presents the speaker's memory as vivid yet fragile: the setting is recalled with confident, almost photographic precision, but the owl itself slips through the memory just as it slips through the room, so that by the end the speaker cannot be sure the event happened at all. The poem seems to explore how our most magical memories are often the ones we can least prove.

The opening is grounded in solid, factual detail. The speaker remembers that the attic bedroom "had two windows" and carefully describes the "skylight", a "tile of thick glass / Like a see-through slate". The simile is homely and tactile, drawn from ordinary roofing material, and the adjective "thick" makes the glass feel weighty and real. This certainty about the room is important because it contrasts so sharply with the uncertainty about the owl. Dean seems to suggest that memory holds on to the everyday framework of a place far more firmly than to the extraordinary moment within it.

The moonlight is then transformed by striking imagery. It falls "Coring the darkness like an apple-peeler", a surprising domestic simile that suggests the light cuts a neat, clean shaft through the night. The image of a "long cylinder of light" continues this precise, geometric quality, as though the beam were a stage spotlight. Into it the owl appears "Suddenly", and the adverb placed at the start of the line captures the shock of the memory. He is "mysterious and grey / In that cold moon": the muted colour and the chill of "cold" create an eerie, dreamlike atmosphere. The metaphor "a piece of night adrift" is perhaps the most haunting image, implying that the owl is not a separate creature at all but a fragment of darkness itself, loose and directionless. Some readers might see him as a visitor

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from another world.

Dean presents the owl largely through absence. The speaker remembers what did not happen: "There was no rattle of his talons, / No gripe or stomp". The onomatopoeic "rattle" and the heavy "stomp" are the sounds that would have made him "solid", so their absence leaves him weightless. The repetition in "floated in" and "floated out" gives his movement a gentle, circular rhythm, and the soft verb "floated" suggests he barely touched the physical world. The single word "Escaped", isolated by the caesura after the dash, is dramatic: it implies the owl has broken free of the night, but also hints that he escapes the speaker's understanding.

Structurally, the poem is a single long stanza of free verse, which mirrors the way a memory unspools in one continuous flow. Dashes interrupt the lines as the speaker adds details and corrects herself, recreating the hesitant process of recollection. The ellipsis after "floated out" marks a gap in time, moving abruptly to "the morning", and the mood shifts. The repetition of "nothing" and the lack of "down" or "limy dropping" strip away any physical evidence, leaving "Nothing to prove he'd ever been at all".

The final, stand-alone line returns to the title, "An owl flew in my bedroom once", but the tag "I think" undermines it completely. Separated from the rest of the poem, the line feels like the adult speaker looking back and admitting doubt. Dean leaves the reader suspended between belief and disbelief, presenting memory as something precious precisely because it cannot be proved.

2 Both Shakespeare and Browning present relationships through the voice of a single male speaker, but their thoughts could hardly be more opposed. Shakespeare

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defines an ideal relationship as a "marriage of true minds" built on constancy and freedom, whereas Browning's Duke reveals a marriage built on ownership, in which a wife who would not be controlled was simply removed. In a sense, Sonnet 116 describes the love that My Last Duchess so chillingly lacks.

The openings immediately establish these opposing attitudes. Shakespeare begins with a solemn, almost legal refusal: "Let me not to the marriage of true minds / Admit impediments". The echo of the Christian marriage service, where the congregation is asked to declare any impediment, frames love as a sacred commitment, and "minds" suggests a meeting of equals rather than a physical bond. Browning's opening, "That's my last Duchess painted on the wall", is casual and possessive. The pronoun "my" reduces the woman to a belonging, and the adjective "last" is disturbing: it implies she was one in a series and that another will follow, which the ending confirms when the Duke negotiates for the Count's daughter. While Shakespeare's relationship joins two people, Browning's relationship is one in which the woman has already become an object on display.

Both speakers consider whether love should change, but they reach opposite conclusions. Shakespeare insists that "love is not love / Which alters when it alteration finds", and the polyptoton of "alters" and "alteration", like "remover to remove", circles round the idea of change only to reject it. True love accepts a partner's flaws rather than bending away from them. The Duke, by contrast, cannot tolerate anything in his wife that he did not command. He complains that she had a heart "too soon made glad, / Too easily impressed" and that "her looks went everywhere". What a modern reader sees as warmth and kindness, thanking the man who brought her cherries or enjoying "The dropping of the daylight in the West", the Duke sees as an insult to his status, since she ranked his "nine-hundred-years-old name / With anybody's gift". Shakespeare's love would not

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"Admit impediments", but the Duke treats his wife's very personality as one.

The two poets also use imagery of fixity in revealing ways. Shakespeare's love is "an ever-fixèd mark / That looks on tempests and is never shaken" and "the star to every wandering bark". These images of the lighthouse and the guiding star make love something stable that gives direction to others, while leaving the "wandering" partner free. The Duke also achieves something "fixed", but only through death and art. The painted Duchess is "Looking as if she were alive", and the curtain "I have drawn for you, but I" shows that he now controls who may see her smile. The final image of Neptune "Taming a sea-horse" acts as a symbol of the marriage itself: power subduing something wild and beautiful. Shakespeare's constancy is freely given; the Duke's is forced.

Time is central to both. Shakespeare personifies Time as the Grim Reaper, whose "bending sickle's compass" will cut down "rosy lips and cheeks", yet insists "Love's not Time's fool". Physical beauty fades, but true love endures "even to the edge of doom". The Duke also defeats time, but sinisterly: by turning his wife into a portrait he freezes her at the moment of her "spot / Of joy", a physical blush he resented while she lived. Shakespeare celebrates a love that outlasts the body, whereas Browning shows a man who preferred a beautiful image to a living woman. The euphemism "I gave commands; / Then all smiles stopped together" is chilling because the caesura and blunt monosyllables make her murder sound like a mere household instruction.

Form reinforces these differences. Sonnet 116 uses the controlled Shakespearean sonnet, its regular iambic pentameter and steady quatrains embodying the constancy it describes, before the closing couplet offers a confident challenge: "If this be error and upon me proved, / I never writ, nor no man ever loved". The

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double negative makes his claim seem unarguable. My Last Duchess is also in iambic pentameter and rhyming couplets, but the heavy enjambment and frequent caesurae, such as the faltering "how shall I say?", disguise the rhyme and make the dramatic monologue sound conversational and evasive. The orderliness of the couplets can be read as the Duke's surface control, while the broken syntax lets his jealousy leak through. Shakespeare's speaker seeks to persuade us of a universal truth; Browning's speaker unknowingly exposes himself.

Ultimately, both poems define love through its opposite. Shakespeare tells us what love "is not", and Browning shows us a man whose relationship was the reverse of everything the sonnet praises: jealous where love should be generous, controlling where it should be free. Reading them together, the Duke's pride makes Shakespeare's ideal seem even more precious and rare.

3 Both Dylan Thomas in Do not go gentle into that good night and D H Lawrence in Piano present intense emotions rooted in the love between a child and a parent. However, the emotions move in opposite directions. Thomas faces the future, desperately urging his dying father to fight, so his grief is expressed as anger and defiance. Lawrence looks back into the past, and a song overwhelms him with nostalgia until his adult self collapses into helpless tears. One poem resists loss; the other surrenders to it.

Thomas's dominant emotion is a furious, pleading determination. The imperative "Rage, rage against the dying of the light" is passionate, and the repetition of "Rage" sounds like a cry rather than an argument. The extended metaphor of the day, "close of day" and "the dying of the light", presents death as nightfall, while the oxymoron "that good night" shows that Thomas understands death can seem

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peaceful and welcome, which is exactly why he fears his father will accept it. The adjective "gentle" becomes almost an accusation. Lawrence's emotion, by contrast, begins softly. The adverb "Softly" and the gentle setting "in the dusk" create a hushed, reflective mood, and the woman's song carries him "back down the vista of years". Interestingly, both poets use the fading light of evening, but where Thomas's dusk is something to be fought, Lawrence's dusk is a doorway into memory.

Both poets present emotion through the relationship with a parent, but in very different images. Lawrence recalls himself as "A child sitting under the piano", pressing "the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings". This physical closeness, the child at the mother's feet, conveys warmth, security and deep affection, and "the boom of the tingling strings" recreates the sensory intensity of a child's experience. Thomas delays any mention of his father until the final stanza, "And you, my father, there on the sad height". This structural delay makes the personal revelation more powerful: the generalised arguments about other men suddenly become private grief. The paradox "Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears" reveals how desperate he is. He would accept anger or blessing, anything that shows his father is still fighting, and the "fierce tears" combine sorrow and strength in one image.

Thomas also builds emotion through examples of other men. The "wise men", "Good men", "Wild men" and "Grave men" each find a reason to resist death, from regret that their "frail deeds" might have shone to the realisation that "Blind eyes could blaze like meteors". The pun on "Grave" suggests both seriousness and burial, and the image of meteors conveys a final, glorious burst of energy. These portraits are like a series of persuasive examples, showing that his emotion is channelled into argument. Lawrence instead presents an inner struggle against his own feelings.

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The phrases "In spite of myself" and "the insidious mastery of song" suggest that nostalgia creeps up on him against his will, and the verb "Betrays" implies that memory is almost an enemy, undermining his adult dignity. Thomas wants his father to fight; Lawrence is fighting himself, and losing.

The climaxes of both poems show emotion at its peak. In Lawrence's final stanza the singer may "burst into clamour" with the "great black piano appassionato", but this present-day performance is "vain": it cannot compete with "The glamour / Of childish days". His "manhood is cast / Down in the flood of remembrance", a metaphor that presents grief as an overwhelming flood sweeping away his adult identity, and the poem ends with the simple confession "I weep like a child for the past". The simile shows that the emotion has transformed him back into the boy he remembers. Thomas's poem ends not with surrender but with both refrains joined together, "Do not go gentle into that good night. / Rage, rage against the dying of the light." The final line is still a command, so the emotion remains unresolved and defiant.

Form is central to how each poet controls these emotions. Thomas uses the villanelle, a strict form with only two rhymes and two repeating refrains. Its relentless circling mirrors obsessive grief, as though he cannot stop repeating his plea, and the tight discipline perhaps shows him straining to contain overwhelming feeling. Lawrence writes three quatrains in long, flowing lines with rhyming couplets such as "song" and "belong". The long lines and soft rhythm create the lilting effect of music itself, drawing the reader into the same nostalgic current. Enjambment, as in "The glamour / Of childish days", carries the reader forward just as the memory carries the speaker.

Overall, both poems explore the pain of losing a parent, but Thomas's emotion is

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active and raging, a refusal to let go, while Lawrence's is passive and tender, a recognition that the past can never be recovered. Perhaps the most moving difference is that Thomas still has time to plead, whereas Lawrence can only weep.

4 Mayella Ewell appears in only one chapter of To Kill a Mockingbird, yet she is arguably the hinge on which the whole novel turns. Her false accusation of rape against Tom Robinson creates the trial that tests Atticus, educates Scout and Jem, and exposes the racism at the heart of Maycomb. However, Harper Lee does not present her simply as a villain. Mayella is both perpetrator and victim: a lonely, abused young woman whose lie destroys an innocent man, and whose own suffering reveals how race, class and gender trapped people in the 1930s South.

Mayella's most obvious importance is structural. Without her accusation there would be no trial, and without the trial the novel would lack its central moral test. In 1930s Alabama, where Jim Crow laws enforced segregation and a black man's word counted for almost nothing against a white woman's, her claim is effectively a death sentence. Lee's readers in 1960 would have recognised echoes of the Scottsboro trials of the 1930s, in which nine young black men were convicted of raping two white women despite overwhelming evidence of their innocence. Through Mayella, Lee shows how easily a white woman's accusation could be used to justify the destruction of a black man, and how the legal system became an instrument of prejudice rather than justice.

Yet Lee carefully complicates our response by revealing the misery of Mayella's life. She is "Nineteen-and-a-half" and, since her mother's death, has acted as a surrogate mother to her seven younger siblings in the squalid Ewell home behind

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the town dump. Bob Ewell spends the relief cheques on whisky, and Atticus's questioning hints strongly that he beats her: the bruises on the right side of her face point to a left-handed attacker, and Bob is left-handed. Tom's testimony goes further, recalling that Mayella told him she had never kissed a grown man and that what her father did to her did not count, a devastating suggestion of incest. In court Tom also says he heard Bob call her a "goddamn whore" and threaten to kill her. Mayella's lie can therefore be read as an act of desperate self-protection. Breaking the rules of her society would have exposed her to her father's violence and the town's contempt, so she sacrifices Tom to save herself.

The detail of the geraniums is one of Lee's most delicate touches. In the Ewells' yard of junk stand "six chipped-enamel slop jars holding brilliant red geraniums", which Maycomb says belong to Mayella. The adjective "brilliant" stands out against the surrounding filth and suggests that she longs for beauty and a better life. Similarly, Tom reveals that she saved up her nickels for a year to send the children to town for ice cream. These glimpses make her a more tragic figure. She is not inherently cruel; she is starved of kindness, which is why she reaches out to the one person who offered it.

Mayella is also important because of what she reveals about Scout's growing maturity. Watching her in the witness box, Scout reflects that "Mayella must have been the loneliest person in the world. She was even lonelier than Boo Radley". This is a key moment of empathy, as Scout begins to apply Atticus's advice to climb into another person's skin. Linking Mayella to Boo is significant: both are outcasts, isolated by their families and by Maycomb's judgement. Mayella's loneliness is intensified by her social position. As "white trash", she is despised by the respectable white community, yet her race prevents her from mixing with black families. She belongs nowhere, and this isolation explains why Tom's ordinary

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courtesy means so much to her.

Her behaviour in court shows how her vulnerability and her power coexist. She suspects Atticus is mocking her when he calls her "ma'am" and "Miss Mayella", because no one has ever treated her with respect. When Atticus's questions corner her, she bursts into an angry tirade and then refuses to speak another word. This outburst exposes the fragility of her story, but it also reveals her humiliation. The ultimate irony is that even Tom expresses pity, admitting that he felt sorry for her. To the white jury this is an outrage, because a black man has dared to place himself above a white woman, and Lee uses the moment to show how deeply racial hierarchy shaped every response in the courtroom.

Atticus's closing speech gives the clearest analysis of Mayella's importance. He states that he has "nothing but pity" for her, but insists that pity for her does not justify sacrificing an innocent man. He explains that she has broken "a rigid and time-honored code of our society": she was white, and she tempted a black man. In other words, her real "crime" in Maycomb's eyes was desire across the colour line, and the accusation is a way of destroying the evidence. Lee shows that Mayella is also a prisoner of the ideal of Southern womanhood, which claimed to protect white women while really controlling them. The code that condemns Tom also traps her.

Ultimately, Mayella matters because she embodies the novel's central idea that prejudice harms everyone it touches. Her lie leads directly to Tom's conviction and to his death when he tries to escape from prison, and it is the clearest example of a "mockingbird" being destroyed. Yet Lee refuses to let readers dismiss her. By presenting her as abused, lonely and frightened, Lee invites a mature, uncomfortable sympathy, while still holding her responsible. In this way Mayella

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reflects the moral complexity of Maycomb itself: a society in which victims of poverty and cruelty turn on those even more powerless than themselves.

5 Prejudice is the central concern of To Kill a Mockingbird, but Harper Lee explores it as something much wider than individual hatred. In Maycomb, prejudice is a habit of mind passed down through generations, a way of sorting people by race, class, gender and reputation before they are known. Through Scout's growing understanding, Lee suggests that prejudice is learned and can therefore be unlearned, yet the tragedy of Tom Robinson shows how devastating it remains when it is built into a whole society. Writing in 1960, as the Civil Rights Movement gathered pace, Lee looks back to the 1930s to challenge her readers' own assumptions.

The most destructive form of prejudice in the novel is racism, embodied in Tom Robinson's trial. Set in Alabama under the Jim Crow laws, which enforced segregation in schools, churches and even the courtroom, the trial echoes the Scottsboro case of the 1930s, in which black men were convicted on false accusations by white women. Atticus proves that Tom could not have beaten Mayella, since his left arm was crippled in a cotton gin accident, yet the all-white jury convicts him. Lee shows that the verdict was decided before the evidence was heard. When Tom says he felt sorry for Mayella, the courtroom reacts with hostility, because a black man has presumed to pity a white woman. Atticus tells the jury that "in our courts all men are created equal", but the novel exposes this ideal as tragically false. Tom's death, shot while trying to escape from prison, is described by Mr Underwood as like "the senseless slaughter of songbirds", linking it directly to the title's symbol of innocence destroyed.

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Lee is particularly interested in the hypocrisy that allows prejudice to survive among respectable people. At Aunt Alexandra's missionary tea, Mrs Merriweather speaks with great feeling about the suffering of the Mrunas, a fictional African tribe, yet in the same breath complains about the black people who work in Maycomb homes. Lee invents the Mrunas to make the irony unmistakable: the ladies' compassion extends only to people who are far away. Similarly, Scout's teacher Miss Gates condemns Hitler's persecution of the Jews and declares that "Over here we don't believe in persecuting anybody", yet Scout overheard her on the courthouse steps saying that black people needed to be taught a lesson. Scout's innocent confusion exposes the adults' double standards and invites readers in 1960 to look honestly at their own.

Prejudice in Maycomb is also deeply bound up with class. Aunt Alexandra forbids Scout to invite Walter Cunningham home because she believes the Cunninghams are beneath the Finches, and she obsesses over "Fine Folks" and family "streaks". Jem's attempt to explain that there are four kinds of folks in the world, from the Finches down through the Cunninghams and the Ewells to black families, shows how firmly this hierarchy has been absorbed by children. Lee makes it clear that class and race intersect. The Ewells are despised as "white trash", but their whiteness still places them above Tom, which is exactly why Bob Ewell's word defeats Tom's. During the Great Depression, when poverty was widespread across the South, poor whites like the Ewells clung to racial superiority as the one status they had left.

Lee also explores prejudice through outsiders who do not fit Maycomb's rules. Boo Radley is turned by gossip into a "malevolent phantom" who supposedly eats raw squirrels and peers in windows. The children's games and dares at the beginning of the novel show how prejudice grows from rumour and fear of difference. Dolphus

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Raymond, a white man who lives with a black woman and has mixed-race children, pretends to be drunk, drinking Coca-Cola from a paper sack, so that Maycomb can explain his choices as weakness rather than conviction. His deception is a quiet criticism of a town that prefers a comfortable excuse to an uncomfortable truth. Even Scout faces prejudice through gender. She is pressured to wear dresses and become a lady, and Jem tells her she is acting like a girl as an insult. Aunt Alexandra's ideal of the Southern Belle limits women's lives, and the fact that women cannot sit on juries, which Scout finds amusing, is a further reminder of inequality.

Against all of this, Lee offers Atticus's moral philosophy as an antidote. His advice that you never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view, until you "climb into his skin and walk around in it", becomes the key to Scout's development. The symbol of the mockingbird reinforces this: Miss Maudie explains that mockingbirds only make music for others to enjoy, and that is why it is a sin to kill one. Tom and Boo are both mockingbirds, harmless people damaged by society's prejudice. By the end, Scout stands on the Radley porch and sees the street from Boo's point of view, finally understanding him as a person rather than a monster. When she says that Boo "was real nice", Atticus replies, "Most people are, Scout, when you finally see them."

Lee therefore presents prejudice as both powerful and fragile. It wins in the courtroom, and Jem's tears after the verdict show how cruelly it shatters a child's faith in justice. Yet the jury taking hours to decide, and Scout's empathy at the close, offer what Miss Maudie calls a "baby-step" towards change. For readers in 1960, as segregation was being challenged across America, Lee's message was urgent: prejudice is not natural but taught, and it is the responsibility of each person to see others clearly.

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6

Lennie Small is significant in Of Mice and Men not only as one of its two protagonists but as the emotional and symbolic centre of Steinbeck's vision of 1930s America. He embodies innocence, dependence and the fragile hope of the American Dream, yet his uncontrollable strength drives the tragedy forward. Through Lennie, Steinbeck explores how a harsh society treats its most vulnerable members and how, during the Great Depression, even the simplest dream of security and companionship was almost impossible to reach.

From the opening section, Steinbeck presents Lennie as George's physical and mental opposite. George is "small and quick", while Lennie is "a huge man, shapeless of face", who walks heavily "the way a bear drags his paws". This animal imagery recurs throughout the novella: Lennie drinks from the pool "like a horse" and is compared by others to a bull or a terrier. The ironic surname "Small" highlights the gap between his body and his childlike mind. The animal comparisons are significant because they suggest something both innocent and dangerous: like an animal, Lennie acts on instinct without understanding consequences. Steinbeck seems to ask whether a man like this can be held morally responsible, a question that becomes urgent by the end.

Lennie is also significant because his relationship with George challenges the loneliness of ranch life. Itinerant workers in the Depression travelled alone from farm to farm, often hounded by poverty and the Dust Bowl, and George later admits that guys who work on ranches are "the loneliest guys in the world". Lennie's delighted refrain, "I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you", shows that their friendship is unique. Lennie therefore makes George different from the other men, giving him a reason for hope. Without Lennie,

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George could live an easier life, spending his money at a cat house, yet his repeated complaint that he could "get along so easy" without Lennie is always followed by loyalty. Lennie gives George's life meaning.

The dream is closely tied to Lennie. He asks George again and again to "tell about the rabbits", and the story of living "off the fatta the lan"' becomes almost a ritual or bedtime story. Lennie's simple, total belief in the dream is infectious. His enthusiasm draws in Candy, who offers his savings, and even, briefly, Crooks, who asks to join them and hoe in the garden. In this way Lennie becomes the means by which Steinbeck shows how desperately the dispossessed men of the Depression longed for land, independence and security. Yet Lennie is also the reason the dream fails. The title, taken from Burns's poem about a mouse whose nest is destroyed, warns that even the best plans of mice and men often go wrong.

Lennie's significance is reinforced by Steinbeck's careful use of foreshadowing. In the first section he has killed a mouse by petting it too hard, and George reminds him of the trouble in Weed, where he grabbed a girl's red dress and would not let go. At the ranch he kills his puppy, saying pitifully "I didn't bounce you hard". Each incident escalates, preparing the reader for the death of Curley's wife. The shooting of Candy's old dog also foreshadows Lennie's fate: Candy regrets that he let a stranger shoot his dog instead of doing it himself, and George later chooses to kill Lennie himself, with the same Luger, in the same way, in the back of the head. Steinbeck's structure gives the novella a sense of tragic inevitability, with Lennie at the centre of every pattern.

Lennie is also a victim, and through him Steinbeck exposes cruelty towards the weak. Curley targets him because he hates big men, and Lennie only fights back

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when George tells him to, crushing Curley's hand while Curley flops "like a fish on a line". Crooks torments him by suggesting George might not come back, showing how even the oppressed pass their pain on to someone weaker. In the 1930s there was little support for people with learning difficulties beyond being sent to an institution, and Crooks's mention of the "booby hatch" shows how society viewed men like Lennie. Lennie's own fearful offer to go and "live in a cave" suggests he senses that the world has no place for him.

The scene in the barn with Curley's wife shows Lennie's significance most clearly. Both are lonely outsiders, and she confides her lost dream of being in the movies. Neither really listens to the other: Lennie talks only of rabbits and soft things. When she invites him to stroke her hair and then panics, his strength kills her. His love of soft things, harmless with a mouse, becomes lethal in an adult world. His reaction, that he has "done another bad thing", shows that he understands only that George will be angry.

In the final section Lennie returns, as George instructed, to the brush by the pool, and the novella's circular structure brings him back to where he began. The heron swallowing the water snake suggests the natural world's survival of the fittest, and Lennie is defenceless against Curley's lynch mob. George's decision to shoot him while describing the farm can be read as the ultimate act of friendship, sparing Lennie a cruel death. Lennie dies looking across the river and saying they should get the place now, so in a sense he is the only character who ever comes close to seeing the dream.

Ultimately, Lennie is significant because he carries the heart of Steinbeck's message. His innocence highlights the brutality of a society where the weak are crushed, and his death marks the death of the dream for George and Candy.

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Through Lennie, Steinbeck asks readers to show compassion for those whom the Depression, and society, left behind.

7 Settings in Of Mice and Men are far more than backgrounds. Steinbeck, who originally conceived the novella as a "play-novelette", builds each section around a single, carefully described location, almost like a stage set. These places reflect the social order of a 1930s California ranch, mirror the characters' isolation and dreams, and create the patterns of hope and foreboding that shape the tragedy. Through them, Steinbeck presents the harsh reality of life for itinerant workers during the Great Depression, and the impossibility of escaping it.

The novella opens and closes by the Salinas River, a few miles south of Soledad, and this natural setting is the most symbolic of all. In the first section the river "runs deep and green", the water is "warm" and has "slipped twinkling over the yellow sands", and the "golden foothill slopes" curve up to the mountains. The rich colours and gentle movement create an almost Edenic sanctuary, a place of innocence apart from the ranch. It is here that George first tells Lennie about the dream, and George tells Lennie to return to this brush if he ever gets into trouble, which makes it a safe haven. Yet even this paradise holds hints of danger: rabbits sit in the sand, but the arrival of the men sends them scurrying for cover and a heron labours up into the air, as if human presence itself disturbs the peace. Steinbeck suggests that nature is beautiful but not protective.

The bunkhouse represents the bleak, impersonal life of the ranch hands. It is a long, rectangular building with whitewashed walls and an unpainted floor, furnished with bunks, a stove and a table scattered with playing cards. The men keep their few possessions in apple boxes nailed to the wall, a detail which shows how little

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they own and how temporary their lives are. During the Depression, migrant workers moved from farm to farm with only their bindles, and the bunkhouse reflects this rootless existence: no one stays long enough to make it a home. It is also a place of conflict. Here Carlson presses Candy to let his dog be shot, and the long silence as the men wait for the gunshot is one of the most painful moments in the novel. Here Curley attacks Lennie and has his hand crushed. The bunkhouse is therefore a setting where the weak are exposed and where violence lies just beneath the surface.

Crooks's room shows the racial hierarchy of the ranch most clearly. It is a little shed that "leaned off the wall of the barn", and his bed is a "long box filled with straw". Living alongside the horses and the broken harnesses he mends, Crooks is literally placed with the animals, separated from the white men because he is black. In the 1930s, segregation and racism were widespread, and Crooks's room embodies this exclusion. Yet his room is also more personal than the bunkhouse: he owns books, including a battered dictionary and a copy of the California civil code, which suggests his intelligence and his awareness of his rights. When Lennie wanders in, Crooks is defensive because the room is the one place where he has some control. The scene shows how isolation hardens people, and his bitter remark that a guy goes nuts if he has nobody reveals the human cost of the separation the setting enforces.

The barn is the setting of the climax. On a quiet Sunday afternoon, while the men play horseshoes outside and the "clang" of the shoes drifts in, Lennie sits in the hay with his dead puppy. The barn should be a place of shelter and work, but the hay and the horses stamping in their stalls create a heavy, uneasy atmosphere. Curley's wife confides her lost dream of the movies, so the barn briefly becomes a place of confession for two lonely outsiders. After her death, Steinbeck describes

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the light softening and the sounds fading as if time had stopped, giving the scene a tragic stillness before the men discover the body and the chase begins. Setting here reflects the collapse of the dream: the place where Lennie was meant to care for a puppy becomes the place where he destroys everything.

The return to the river in the final section completes Steinbeck's circular structure, but the setting has changed. Now the pool lies in the "late afternoon" and the shadows climb up the mountains. A heron "lanced down" and swallows a water snake, an image of survival of the fittest that foreshadows Lennie's own fate. The sanctuary of the opening has become a place of death, and the dream George once told there is told again as Lennie dies. This cyclical structure suggests that for men like George and Lennie nothing really changes: they end where they began, and the dream remains out of reach.

Steinbeck's time setting is equally important. The action takes place over just a few days, from Thursday evening to Sunday afternoon, which creates intensity and inevitability. Each section begins at a particular time of day, often at dusk, and the fading light repeatedly creates foreboding. The wider historical setting of the Depression and the Dust Bowl underpins everything: the men are sent to the ranch by employment agencies such as Murray and Ready's, live from one pay cheque to the next and dream of a "little place" of their own because owning land seemed impossible.

Finally, the location of Soledad is significant. The name means "solitude" in Spanish, and the town quietly frames the novella's central theme of loneliness. Through his settings, Steinbeck shows how the ranch reproduces the divisions of American society, and how the natural world, beautiful but indifferent, cannot save the vulnerable.

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In The Whale Rider, travelling is never simply a change of place. Ihimaera uses the journeys of the whales and of his human characters to explore identity, belonging and the pull of ancestry. Almost every journey in the novel is, in the end, a journey home, and by placing the ancient migrations of the whale herd beside the modern travels of Rawiri and Kahu, Ihimaera suggests that the Maori people of Whangara can only face the future by staying connected to the sea, the land and the legends that brought them there.

The novel opens with travelling on a mythic scale. In the prologue, Kahutia Te Rangi arrives at Whangara on the back of a whale, and the legend of his journey across the ocean becomes the founding story of the tribe. His act of throwing spears, with the last spear refusing to grow until it is needed, turns the journey into a promise that will be fulfilled in a later generation. Ihimaera, writing in 1987 as part of a wider revival of Maori language and culture, deliberately begins with a sacred journey rather than with the arrival of Europeans, so that the reader sees New Zealand through Maori eyes first. Travel here is creation: it brings a people into being.

Ihimaera then interweaves the present-day journey of the whale herd led by the ancient bull whale. These italicised sections give the whales a voice and a memory, and the bull whale longs for the human who once rode him. His insistence on travelling back towards the waters of his old companion shows that, for the whales as well as the humans, journeys are driven by love and grief for the past. The females of the herd are anxious when the route takes them close to New Zealand, and the older whale's stubbornness clearly mirrors Koro Apirana's refusal to adapt. Crucially, the herd's journey has been disturbed by nuclear testing in the

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Pacific, which kills some of their young. This reflects real concern in the 1980s about French tests at Moruroa, and it suggests that modern human activity has poisoned the routes that once united whale and man. The herd's eventual stranding at Whangara is therefore not random: it is the tragic end point of a journey shaped by both ancestry and environmental damage.

Rawiri's travels form a human parallel. Restless and young, he leaves Whangara for Australia and later goes with his friend Jeff to Papua New Guinea. At first this seems like the typical adventure of a young man escaping a small community, and Ihimaera presents the excitement of city life with some humour. However, the plantation exposes him to racism when he sees how a local worker who has been injured is treated with contempt. This moment matters because it makes Rawiri recognise, perhaps for the first time, that his own people could be seen in the same dismissive way. Shortly afterwards he senses that he must return, and his journey becomes one of self-discovery: by travelling away from Whangara he understands what it means to belong there. In the context of the 1970s and 1980s, when many young Maori migrated to cities and overseas, Ihimaera seems to warn about the loss that comes with leaving, while also suggesting that distance can strengthen identity rather than destroy it.

Kahu's journeys are quieter but perhaps the most significant. After her birth and her mother's death, she lives with her mother's family and travels to Whangara for visits, before eventually staying. Each return deepens her bond with Nanny Flowers and her stubborn love for Koro, who keeps rejecting her because she is a girl. Her movements between two homes reflect her position between two worlds, yet she always gravitates towards the marae and the sea. Her visit to the sea when she retrieves Koro's carved stone is a small journey downwards, into the water, which shows that she already belongs to the ocean of her ancestor.

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Travelling also reveals the conflict between tradition and change. Porourangi writes to Rawiri about a trip with Koro to Raukawa, where the Maori are preparing their young people for new challenges and technology. Porourangi is impressed, but Koro remains resistant. Ihimaera uses this journey to show that travelling exposes people to new ideas, and that Koro's refusal to learn from it is part of his blindness towards Kahu. He wants to protect tradition by standing still, while the novel implies that tradition only survives if it can move.

The climax brings all these journeys together. When the herd is stranded and the bull whale cannot be saved by the men, Kahu climbs onto his back and rides him out to sea. This is the novel's most powerful journey, a deliberate echo of the prologue, and it confirms that she is the true heir of Kahutia Te Rangi. The family's horror as she disappears creates genuine tension, but the journey becomes a rite of passage: she is taken into the ocean and returned, found floating near the shore. The cyclical structure of the novel, arranged by the seasons from spring to winter, supports this sense that every journey outward must curve back towards home.

Ultimately, travelling in The Whale Rider is significant because it links past and present, whale and human, myth and modern life. Ihimaera presents journeys as tests: those who travel and remember where they come from, like Rawiri and Kahu, return stronger, while Koro must undergo a journey of his own, from rejection to acceptance, before the tribe can move forward.

9 Nanny Flowers is presented as the quiet centre of power in The Whale Rider. Although her husband, Koro Apirana, is the chief and the voice of tradition, it is

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Nanny who protects Kahu, keeps the old customs alive when Koro neglects them, and finally helps the tribe accept that its future leader is a girl. Through her, Ihimaera shows that Maori women have always held strength and authority, even in a society that appears to belong to men.

From the start, Nanny is presented through a warm, comic and fiercely loyal relationship with Koro. Her real name, Putiputi, means flowers, and the affectionate nickname softens a character who is in fact formidable. Their marriage is full of argument, but Nanny always has the upper hand. When asked whether they quarrel, she explains that they do not really argue: "He argues, and I win". The neat, punchy rhythm of this line captures her humour and her confidence, and it overturns the expected hierarchy of chief and wife. She also calls Koro a "paka", insulting him with an affection that only a long marriage allows. Rawiri, who narrates with obvious fondness, makes the reader enjoy these exchanges, yet beneath the comedy lies a serious point: Koro's authority is not as absolute as he believes.

Nanny's strength is most visible in her defence of Kahu. Koro is bitterly disappointed when his first great-grandchild is a girl, and he refuses to see her as worthy of the line of Kahutia Te Rangi. Nanny, by contrast, welcomes her immediately. It is Nanny who agrees that Porourangi may name the baby Kahu, after the ancestor, a decision that infuriates Koro because the name was meant for a male heir. Later, when Kahu visits Whangara, Nanny looks after her and their bond grows closer and more playful. Ihimaera contrasts the open love of the great-grandmother with the coldness of the great-grandfather, so that the reader's sympathy for Kahu is guided through Nanny's eyes.

She is also presented as the true keeper of tradition. When Koro will not perform

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the customary burial of Kahu's birth cord at the marae, Nanny carries it out herself with Rawiri and the boys. In Maori custom this act binds a child to the land and the people, and by insisting on it Nanny ensures that Kahu is rooted in Whangara. As the ritual takes place, Rawiri believes he sees a spear land nearby, a mysterious sign that recalls the last spear of the ancestor. Ihimaera hints that the ancestors themselves approve of Nanny's decision. This is an important irony: the man who claims to defend tradition ignores it, while the woman he often dismisses honours it.

Ihimaera roots Nanny's power in genealogy. She descends from women such as Muriwai, who took a man's role to save her people from drowning, and Mihi Kotukutuku, who asserted her seniority over a chief. By including these real figures from Maori history, Ihimaera reminds readers that Maori society, although largely patriarchal, contains a rich line of women who broke its rules. Nanny's boast that Koro "isn't any chief. I'm his chief" is therefore more than a joke: it places her within that tradition of female authority. Writing in the 1980s, when the role of women was being debated in Maori communities as in many others, Ihimaera uses Nanny to suggest that change is not a betrayal of culture but a rediscovery of it.

Nanny also challenges Koro directly and intelligently. She compares his treatment of Kahu to racism, forcing him to see that judging a child by her sex is as unjust as judging a person by colour. She tells him that "Girls can do anything these days", a line that sounds modern and almost casual, yet it gently pushes against the rigid traditions he upholds. Her arguments do not succeed at once, which makes her persistence all the more admirable.

Finally, Nanny is presented as wise and patient. When Koro takes the boys out to sea and drops his carved stone into the water as a test, none of them can retrieve

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it. Later Kahu dives and brings it back, and Nanny, who sees this with Rawiri, decides that they should keep it secret for now. She understands that Koro is not yet ready to accept the truth, and that revealing it too soon would only harden him. Her timing is perfect: when the whales are stranded and Kahu rides the bull whale, Nanny gives the stone to Koro, and he finally realises that Kahu is his rightful successor. In this moment Nanny's wisdom brings about the resolution of the whole novel.

Overall, Ihimaera presents Nanny Flowers as funny, loving, stubborn and wise. She is a reminder that leadership in the novel is not only a matter of titles. Through her protection of Kahu and her careful handling of Koro, Nanny embodies the strength of Maori women and helps the tribe find a future that honours its past.

10 In The Joy Luck Club, hopes and dreams are the inheritance the mothers try to pass on to their daughters. Having lost homes, families and even children in China, the four mothers pour everything into the promise of America, imagining daughters who will be free, confident and valued for themselves. Tan presents these dreams with deep sympathy, yet she also shows how their intensity creates misunderstanding and pain, because the daughters cannot always carry hopes formed in a world they never knew.

The novel's opening parable establishes the theme. An old woman sails to America carrying a swan, dreaming that in this new country she will have a daughter who will never be judged "by the loudness of her husband's belch" and who will be "too full to swallow any sorrow". The swan, once a duck that wanted to become "more than what was hoped for", becomes a symbol of transformation. Yet when the woman arrives, the swan is taken by immigration officials and she is left with a

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single feather. The image is quietly heartbreaking: the dream survives only as a fragment, and she must wait until she can tell her daughter what it means in "perfect American English". Tan, drawing on the Chinese tradition of storytelling through parable, frames the whole novel as a search for the language in which mothers and daughters can share their hopes.

Suyuan Woo embodies the immigrant faith in the American Dream, the belief that hard work and determination can bring success to anyone. Jing-mei recalls that "America was where all my mother's hopes lay", and the phrase suggests both devotion and burden: if America is where all the hopes lie, then the daughter becomes their main vessel. In "Two Kinds", Suyuan watches television prodigies such as Ginny Tiu and Shirley Temple and decides Jing-mei can be a prodigy too. The piano lessons with the deaf teacher Old Chong turn the dream into comedy and then humiliation when Jing-mei performs badly at the talent show. Their argument reaches its painful climax when Jing-mei wishes she were dead like the babies her mother lost in China. Tan shows that Suyuan's hopes are an act of love, but also a way of compensating for loss, and that pressure can turn a dream into a weapon.

That loss lies at the heart of Suyuan's deepest dream: to find the twin daughters she abandoned by the roadside while fleeing Kweilin during the war with Japan. Her husband, Canning, explains how they searched for years after the war. The dream that drives her through her whole American life is not success but reunion, and after her death the other mothers ask Jing-mei to fulfil it. In "A Pair of Tickets", Jing-mei travels to China and meets her half-sisters. Seeing their faces together, she realises they resemble their mother, at last seeing "her long-cherished wish". The ending allows a dream to come true, but only after Suyuan's death, which gives it a bittersweet quality: hopes survive across

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generations even when the dreamer does not.

An-mei Hsu's hopes are shaped by her own mother's suffering. In China, her mother became a concubine and was shamed, and she took her own life so that An-mei and her brother would gain status in the household. An-mei learns from this that a woman must fight for her own fate. In America she hopes that Rose will speak up for herself, yet Rose, as her marriage to Ted collapses, is passive and indecisive. An-mei's frustration shows how a mother's hope for strength can sound like criticism to a daughter raised in a different culture.

Ying-ying St Clair's dreams are perhaps the most tragic. As a girl she lost herself at the Moon Festival, and later she accepted a disastrous first marriage as if it were her fate. In America her husband, Clifford, mistranslates her words and silences, and she fades into a shadow of herself. She hopes Lena will not repeat her passivity, and when she sees Lena's unequal marriage to Harold, with its divided bills and empty house, she decides to tell her story to cut loose her daughter's own tiger spirit. Tan suggests that for these women, whose lives in a patriarchal and sometimes polygamous society were decided by others, the greatest hope is simply that their daughters will choose.

Lindo Jong's dream for Waverly is achievement through cleverness. She teaches her the art of "invisible strength", and Waverly becomes a chess champion. Yet Lindo's pride, displayed when she shows Waverly off at the market, makes her daughter feel owned, and Waverly's embarrassment ("telling everybody I'm your daughter") ruptures their bond. Later Lindo realises she wanted her daughter to have "American circumstances and Chinese character", and fears she has only succeeded with the first half.

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Overall, Tan presents hopes and dreams as both the strength and the tragedy of the immigrant experience. The mothers, who came to America in the 1940s fleeing war and oppression, see their daughters as proof that their sacrifices meant something. The daughters, raised in American individualism, often experience these hopes as pressure. By the end, however, through Jing-mei's journey, Tan suggests that once the daughters understand their mothers' stories, the dreams can finally be shared rather than imposed.

11 Lindo Jong is important in The Joy Luck Club because she shows, more vividly than any other mother, how a woman can outwit a system designed to silence her. Her story of escape from an arranged marriage in China is one of the novel's great triumphs, and her clever, often combative relationship with Waverly in America dramatises the central conflict of the book: the struggle between a Chinese mother's hopes and an American daughter's independence. Through Lindo, Tan explores strength, sacrifice and the painful question of what is lost when a culture is carried across an ocean.

Lindo matters first as a founding member of the Joy Luck Club. Alongside Suyuan Woo, An-mei Hsu and Ying-ying St Clair, she meets regularly to play mahjong, eat and share stories, and the club becomes a substitute family for immigrants who have lost their own. Her sharp tongue and competitiveness, particularly with Suyuan over whose daughter is more successful, add both humour and tension to these meetings, and help Tan show that friendship and rivalry can sit side by side.

Her most significant role, however, comes in "The Red Candle". She begins by declaring that she "once sacrificed my life to keep my parents' promise", a dramatic opening that instantly sets up her story as one of loss and recovery.

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Promised in marriage as a small child to Huang Tyan-yu, she goes to live with his family at twelve after a flood drives her own family away, and her mother gives her a jade necklace as a parting gift. In the Huang household she is trained to serve her tyrannical mother-in-law, Huang Taitai, and to please a spoiled, childish husband. Tan uses Lindo's experience to expose a patriarchal society in which girls were valued for obedience and fertility, and in which a young woman had almost no control over her own life.

Yet Lindo refuses to be erased. On her wedding day, looking at herself in a mirror, she realises she has hidden thoughts that no one can take from her, comparing herself to the wind, which cannot be seen but has great force. This becomes her personal philosophy. That night she secretly blows out her husband's end of the marriage candle, which was supposed to burn all night as a sign of a lasting union, while the servant who should have been watching lies that it stayed lit. Later Lindo turns the family's superstition against them, claiming that the ancestors have warned her in a dream that the marriage is doomed and pointing to "signs" that convince Huang Taitai. She is released with money to go to America, without dishonouring her parents. The episode is important because it reverses the traditional pattern: the passive bride becomes a strategist, and Tan uses Chinese customs and beliefs not only to show oppression but to show a woman's ingenuity within it.

In America, Lindo's importance shifts to her role as a mother. She marries Tin Jong and has three children, naming her daughter Waverly after the street where they live. In "Rules of the Game", narrated by Waverly, Lindo passes on the lesson of "invisible strength", telling her daughter that the "strongest wind cannot be seen". This links directly back to Lindo's own wind imagery in China, creating a structural bridge between mother and daughter stories. Waverly applies the lesson

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to chess and becomes a champion, while Lindo makes sacrifices for her success. Yet when Lindo proudly shows her off in the market, Waverly is embarrassed and protests that she wishes her mother would stop telling everybody she is her daughter. Their silent battle afterwards, imagined by Waverly as a chess game against her mother, shows Lindo as a formidable opponent. Tan suggests that the very strength Lindo taught her daughter becomes a source of conflict between them.

In "Four Directions", the adult Waverly fears her mother's judgement of her fiancé, Rich, remembering how critical Lindo was of her first husband, Marvin. Waverly sees her mother as powerful and almost frightening, yet when she finally confronts her she finds an old, tired woman. This moment is important because Tan reveals how the daughters often misread their mothers, projecting their own fears onto them.

Lindo's final story, "Double Face", gives the novel's clearest exploration of cultural identity. She admits that she wanted her children to have "American circumstances and Chinese character", but realises that she cannot pass on the second half. When she visits China, she is treated as a foreigner, and she feels she has lost something in becoming American. Her description of having two faces, one Chinese and one American, captures the experience of many immigrants who came to San Francisco in the 1940s during and after the war, and who found themselves belonging fully to neither world.

Overall, Lindo Jong is important because she represents both resistance and loss. Her triumph in China celebrates the "invisible strength" of women in a society that offered them little freedom, while her relationship with Waverly shows how that strength is transformed, and sometimes misunderstood, in a new country.

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Through Lindo, Tan suggests that the mothers' greatest gift is their stories, and that only by listening can the daughters understand the power they have inherited.

12 Things Fall Apart is built around a series of tragic events, each one loosening Okonkwo's grip on the world he has fought to master. Achebe presents these events on two levels at once: the personal tragedy of a great man destroyed by his own fear of weakness, and the wider tragedy of Igbo society as colonial power and Christianity arrive. The individual disasters, from Ikemefuna's death to Okonkwo's suicide, gain their full force because they mirror the collapse of an entire culture.

The title, taken from W B Yeats's poem "The Second Coming", warns the reader from the start that this is a story of disintegration. Achebe, writing in 1958 as Nigeria moved towards independence, deliberately sets out to show Igbo society in all its complexity before it falls, so that its destruction is felt as a genuine loss. In the tradition of Aristotle's tragic hero, Okonkwo begins at the height of his power: a famous wrestler, a wealthy farmer with barns of yams, three wives and titles earned in war. His fatal flaw, however, is established early. He is ruled by a fear of being thought weak like his father, Unoka, and this hamartia drives him into almost every tragic event that follows.

The most devastating of these is the killing of Ikemefuna. The boy comes to Umuofia as compensation after a woman from the clan is murdered in Mbaino, and he lives in Okonkwo's household for three years. Achebe shows a genuine bond forming: Ikemefuna calls Okonkwo father, and Nwoye blossoms in his company. When the Oracle decrees that the boy must die, the elder Ogbuefi Ezeudu warns Okonkwo not to take part because the boy calls him father. Okonkwo ignores him.

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On the journey through the forest, Achebe builds tension through Ikemefuna's innocent thoughts of returning home to his mother, so that the attack shocks the reader as much as the boy. His final cry, "My father, they have killed me!", is followed by Okonkwo's own blow, struck because he "was afraid of being thought weak". The bitter irony is that Okonkwo's act of "strength" is really cowardice before the opinion of others. Its consequences are tragic in themselves: Okonkwo cannot eat or sleep for days, and Nwoye feels something give way inside him, a wound that eventually pushes him towards the missionaries.

Achebe presents a second tragic event as pure accident, which deepens the sense of a man pursued by fate. At Ezeudu's funeral, Okonkwo's gun explodes and a piece of iron kills the dead man's sixteen-year-old son. Because killing a clansman is a crime against the earth goddess, even when unintended, Okonkwo must flee with his family to his mother's village, Mbanta, for seven years. His compound is destroyed by men from Umuofia, including his friend Obierika, who acts out of duty rather than hatred. Achebe captures the tragic conflict between law and feeling here, as Obierika asks why a man should suffer so greatly for an offence he committed inadvertently. Igbo justice is shown to be orderly and spiritual, yet it is also unbending, and Okonkwo loses the years in which he might have taken the highest titles.

Exile is tragic for another reason: it means Okonkwo is absent when Christianity takes root. While he is in Mbanta, missionaries arrive, and Nwoye joins them, a loss Okonkwo regards as worse than death. Achebe shows how the new religion attracts those whom the clan has rejected, such as the outcasts and mothers of twins, and this hints that the tragedy of Igbo society comes partly from within. The phrase that gives the novel its title is echoed by Obierika's sense that the clan can no longer act as one because the white man "has put a knife on the

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things that held us together". The image of severed bonds turns the personal tragedies into a communal one.

When Okonkwo returns to Umuofia, he finds a changed world. After the destruction of the church and the humiliation of the elders in prison, a meeting is called to decide whether to fight. When court messengers arrive to stop it, Okonkwo kills the head messenger with his machete. In the silence that follows, he realises the clan will not go to war, and he understands that he is alone. His suicide is the novel's final tragic event, and its cruellest irony: in Igbo belief suicide is an abomination, so the man who spent his life fleeing his father's shameful end is himself denied an honourable burial. Obierika's grief is raw as he tells the District Commissioner that Okonkwo was "one of the greatest men in Umuofia" and will now "be buried like a dog".

Achebe ends by shifting to the District Commissioner's viewpoint. He considers that Okonkwo's story might make an interesting chapter, or perhaps "a reasonable paragraph", in his book The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger. This final tragedy is one of misrepresentation: a whole life and culture are reduced to a footnote in a colonial account. Achebe, who wrote partly in response to European novels that portrayed Africans as savage, leaves the reader painfully aware that this novel is itself the fuller story the Commissioner will never tell.

Overall, the tragic events of Things Fall Apart are significant because they combine personal flaw, chance and historical force. Okonkwo is destroyed by his own rigid idea of manliness, but also by a world that is falling apart around him, and Achebe ensures that the reader mourns both.

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Unoka is dead before Things Fall Apart begins, yet he is one of the most powerful presences in the novel. Achebe presents him as gentle, idle, musical and hopelessly in debt, a man who fails by every measure Umuofia values. His real significance, though, lies in his effect on others, above all on his son. Okonkwo's whole life is a reaction against Unoka, and by the end of the novel Achebe suggests, with deep irony, that in running so hard from his father Okonkwo creates a tragedy of his own.

Achebe introduces Unoka in the first chapter through a vivid portrait that is affectionate as well as critical. He is a "loafer" who is "quite incapable of thinking about tomorrow", happiest when drinking palm wine or playing his flute. He loves the season after the harvest when musicians play, and he delights in the beauty of the world, such as the first kites returning in the dry season. Neighbouring villages ask for Unoka's band to come and play. These details are significant because they show that Unoka is not wicked: he is an artist in a society that measures worth in yams, titles and courage in war. Achebe invites the reader to see some value in what Umuofia despises, while also making clear that Unoka's neglect harms those around him, since his wife and children barely have enough to eat.

His debts define his reputation. He borrows from everyone, "from a few cowries to quite substantial amounts", and never repays. In the scene with his neighbour Okoye, who comes to ask for his money back, Unoka laughs and points to the chalk lines on his wall, each one representing a debt, and explains that he will pay his biggest debts first. The scene is comic, and Unoka's dignity and charm make it hard to dislike him, yet it also reveals his complete lack of shame. In Igbo society, where a man's standing depended on his achievements and his ability to support a household, this is a serious failing. Unoka has taken no title, and the word

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"agbala", which means both a man without titles and a woman, is used of him. Achebe shows how deeply gendered the clan's values are: to be gentle and unsuccessful is to be seen as womanly.

This is the root of Unoka's effect on Okonkwo. As a boy, Okonkwo is wounded when a playmate calls his father agbala, and he resolves never to be like him. Achebe states that he was "ruled by one passion", to hate everything Unoka loved, including "gentleness" and "idleness". The language of rule is telling: Okonkwo believes he is in control of his life, but he is in fact governed by his father's memory. Unlike Unoka, he works tirelessly, starts his farm with borrowed seed yams from Nwakibie, survives a disastrous harvest, and becomes a famous wrestler and warrior with two barns of yams and three wives. Achebe acknowledges that his fame rests on solid personal achievements, and in a society that judged a man by his own worth rather than his father's, Okonkwo's rise is genuinely impressive.

Yet Unoka's shadow also produces Okonkwo's harshness. He rules his household with "a heavy hand", beats his wives, and even breaks the Week of Peace by beating Ojiugo, offending the earth goddess. His fear of resembling his father makes him treat any tenderness in himself as weakness. This is most tragic when he kills Ikemefuna, the boy who calls him father, because he is afraid of being thought weak. Achebe suggests that the ghost of Unoka is present in that forest: Okonkwo strikes not only the boy, but the gentleness he fears in himself.

Unoka's influence passes down another generation through Nwoye. Okonkwo sees in his son the same softness he hated in his father, and he worries constantly that Nwoye is lazy and womanly. Nwoye, in fact, prefers his mother's stories to tales of war, and Okonkwo's brutality, culminating in Ikemefuna's death, drives him away. When Nwoye joins the missionaries, drawn by the poetry of the new religion, he

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becomes in a sense a return of Unoka: a sensitive young man repelled by violence. Achebe creates a cycle in which the father's gentleness, rejected by the son, reappears in the grandson.

Unoka's death is also significant. He dies of a swelling sickness that is an abomination to the earth goddess, and he is carried into the Evil Forest to die, so that he is not buried. Okonkwo spends his life trying to avoid such a fate, yet the novel ends with Okonkwo hanging from a tree, an act equally abhorrent to the clan, so that his own people cannot touch or bury him. Obierika's bitter words that he will "be buried like a dog" complete the irony. Father and son, opposites in life, end in the same disgrace.

Achebe, writing to show the complexity of Igbo society to readers who knew only colonial stereotypes, uses Unoka to question the clan's values as well as Okonkwo's. Unoka's music and kindness are qualities a different society might have praised. Overall, Unoka affects others less through what he does than through what he represents: a fear that warps Okonkwo, wounds Nwoye and ultimately helps to destroy the man who tried hardest to escape him.