

English

Working with Four
Contemporary Scottish Plays
*Britannia Rules; Tally's Blood;
Amang the Crows; The 3 Estaites*

Student Support Materials

[INTERMEDIATE 2;
HIGHER]



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PREFACE

These Support Notes aim to extend students' understanding and appreciation of selected Scottish drama texts: *Britannia Rules* (Liz Lochhead, 2003), *Tally's Blood* (Ann Marie di Mambro, 2002), *Amang the Crows* (Charles Barron, 2005), and *The 3 Estaites* (Alan Spence, 2002). Texts of all the plays under discussion have been published and distributed to English departments by Learning and Teaching Scotland; additional copies of all titles remain available. We assume that students, guided by their tutor(s), will already have read one or more of the plays, and the Introductions in the published texts.

All the plays may be read and enjoyed by students at various levels within the National Qualifications in English. The potential variety of levels at which they may be studied is reflected in the range of the suggested assignments that are incorporated into each section of this pack, and from which students should select as appropriate. Throughout the Notes these assignments, and the activities suggested for further study, are highlighted and printed within a ruled box.

Separate Learning and Teaching Guides in Drama are also published for these four texts. While there are obvious and significant differences of approach and emphasis between study for courses and examinations in English and Drama, there is naturally also some overlap, and students may wish to refer to the Drama Guides to supplement their use of these Notes. Students may also wish to refer to two other NQ English publications from Learning and Teaching Scotland: *Working with Scottish Plays* (1999) and *Using Scottish Texts* (1999).

For ease of reference, within each section of the Notes the four plays are treated in the same order, as follows: (1) *Britannia Rules*, (2) *Tally's Blood*, (3) *Amang the Crows* and (4) *The 3 Estaites*. The Charles Barron play is published in parallel Scots (or 'Doric') and English versions. The references in these Notes are to the Scots version, *Amang the Crows*.

Introduction

Readers of these Notes will doubtless have had a varied experience of studying plays in school. Some of you will have read and analysed many plays, ranging through one-act plays to works by contemporary playwrights and Shakespearean drama. The school experience of others may be more limited. Some will already be confirmed theatre-goers, while others may have had little or no opportunity (or inclination!) to see plays performed in the theatre. Some will have taken drama as a school subject, and will be accustomed to looking at a drama text from the points of view of actor and director, while others will have no such perspective. Through films and television, however, all of us are familiar with the basics of drama. ‘Soaps’, television plays, drama documentaries and epic films such as *Lord of the Rings* were not written to be performed live on stage before an audience. But they are obviously ‘dramatic’, and although they have their own distinctive features, many of their characteristics are shared with stage plays.

Later in this Introduction our brief examination of such common characteristics is intended to bolster the confidence of the less experienced among you by showing that you already have a sound basis for appreciation and understanding of the selected plays. For the more experienced, the discussion should serve as a quick aide-mémoire to basic features of drama.

Before we examine these features, let us set modern drama in its historical context. Formal drama was devised some 2500 years ago by the ancient Greeks – the word ‘drama’ derives from their word for ‘action’. Performances of Greek tragedies and comedies were an established part of their religious and seasonal festivals from the 5th century BC. Although most of these plays have been lost, some of the best have survived in the tragedies of Aeschylus (*The Oresteia*), Euripides (*The Trojan Women*, *Medea*) and Sophocles (*Antigone*, *Oedipus Rex*), and in the comedies of Aristophanes (*The Frogs*, *Lysistrata*). Modern Scottish translations and adaptations have helped to demonstrate the timeless social and political relevance of these ancient classics: these include Douglas Young’s *The Puddocks* (a Scots rendering of *The Frogs*), Liz Lochhead’s adaptation of *Medea*, David Greig’s *Oedipus the Visionary*, Tom McGrath’s *The Tragedy of Electra*, and Edwin Morgan’s *Phaedra* (from Euripides, via Jean Racine’s 17th-century French version).

The subsequent evolution of drama encompasses medieval morality plays (*Everyman*), which established a tradition that Sir David Lindsay adopted and extended to the political arena in his *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaites*, a modern version of which is Alan Spence's *The 3 Estaites*. In the 16th and early 17th centuries there was the great Renaissance flowering of Elizabethan theatre (Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson and many others). Later in the 17th century came the dominance of Restoration drama – comedies of manners such as Congreve's *The Way of the World* and Wycherley's *The Country Wife*).

The 19th and early 20th centuries saw the rise of social realism (Ibsen – *An Enemy of the People*, *Hedda Gabler*, and Chekhov – *The Cherry Orchard*, *Uncle Vanya*), the naturalism of Strindberg (*Miss Julie*) and the comedy dramas of Shaw (*Major Barbara*, *Pygmalion*), in which character is often subordinate to ideas. Bertolt Brecht (*The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *The Good Woman of Sezuan*) reacted against realism, and used various theatrical techniques to 'distance' or 'alienate' audiences from the action, reminding them that what they witnessed was not reality, but merely a representation of it. The work of Pirandello (*Six Characters in Search of an Author*), with its grim humour, is also concerned with the distinction between reality and illusion.

At the same time in America, however, realism was the basis for the influential work of Eugene O'Neill (*Desire under the Elms*, *Strange Interlude*.) In the mid-20th century Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* represented the most radical departure from realism. In his dissection of the human condition he flouted conventions of plot and characterisation, and was a foremost practitioner in the movement that came to be known as 'Theatre of the Absurd', which included the American Edward Albee, and the Romanian Eugene Ionesco. Beckett's influence may be clearly seen in the plays of Pinter (*The Caretaker*, *The Birthday Party*). The work of Arthur Miller (*Death of a Salesman*, *A View from the Bridge*) did not obviously draw on that of any of his predecessors or contemporaries, but in setting his tragedies in domestic and family contexts he followed the lead of Ibsen.

In 20th-century Scottish drama the first major figure was James Bridie (Osborne Henry Mavor), who was a founder of the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre, and whose plays of ideas (e.g. *The Sleeping Clergyman*, *Jonah and the Whale*) enjoyed considerable popular success. A defining moment for Scottish drama came with the 7:84 group's touring production of John McGrath's *The Cheviot, the Stag, and the Black, Black Oil* (1973), in which hard-hitting political satire is conveyed through a roistering mix of pantomime, song, dance, and ceilidh. The

televised production (1974) had considerable impact. In its railing against corruption, and the injustices imposed on the common people, it mirrors the 16th-century concerns of Sir David Lindsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaites*. Also in the nineteen-seventies and eighties came a rich batch of plays in which urban work and social issues were treated with a fresh and down-to-earth immediacy: Bill Bryden's *Willie Rough*, Roddy MacMillan's *The Bevellers*, John Byrne's *The Slab Boys*, and Tony Roper's *The Steamie*. In more recent years the diverse work of playwrights such as Liz Lochhead (*Quelques Fleurs*, *Mary Queen of Scots Got her Head Chopped Off*, *Britannia Rules*), Ann Marie di Mambro (*Tally's Blood*) and Catherine Czerkawska (*Wormwood*) has merited the critical praise it has received.

This extremely potted history has been necessarily highly selective, subjective and superficial, and omissions obviously far outnumber those included. Nevertheless, drama today is indebted to its rich traditions, and contemporary playwrights draw freely on that history.

We have already alluded to the significant impact on drama of the media of film, television and, to a lesser degree, radio. These media have certainly extended drama's range and variety, although the lure to playwrights of a television audience may have reduced the number of plays written for the stage. In some instances works for the media have further challenged established drama conventions, but in general they have provided listeners and viewers with a readily accessible literacy in the genre that was previously unthinkable.

As the title page of this document indicates, the four texts that we will discuss in these Notes are 'Scottish' plays: all are by Scots writers; all are set in Scotland (except for *Amang the Craws*, where the action moves between Scotland and America); all use, to a greater or lesser extent, forms of Scots dialect. The plays, then, are distinctively 'Scottish' in their provenance, their background, much of their language, and in many of their allusions and references. As a result, all have special appeal to Scottish audiences. However, the issues they address relate to the human condition, which knows no national boundaries. All four plays, therefore, will speak to audiences everywhere.

Bearing in mind the caveat that the conventions of drama are now very fluid, and that the use of experimental techniques has in recent times become so common that they may no longer seem radical, what are the features that we can still expect to find in most plays? As in prose fiction, there is a **narrative** dimension. Most plays tell a story of some kind – they present a sequence of *happenings*, but by demonstration rather

than by recounting. The **plot** of the play is the logical coherence of the sequence of events. The drama critic Kenneth Tynan highlighted the essential difference between prose fiction and drama:

A novel is a static thing that one moves through: a play is a dynamic thing that moves past one. [Curtains, 1961]

In prose fiction the author has ample scope to develop the narrative through description, exposition, analysis, and reflection. In drama, however, the story is primarily developed through **dialogue** between **characters**, although **stage directions** (for the benefit of director, actor and reader) offer some degree of latitude for the author's own voice. We become familiar with the characters through what they say, what they do, and what others say about them.

There is a further parallel with prose fiction in the fact that most plays are **structured** to have a recognisable **beginning, middle, and end**. Together, these constitute the **action** of the play, which concerns not only physical happenings, but also psychological development. At the outset we are introduced to the time, place and background of the action, and to the main characters. Early in the play the **tensions** or **conflicts** between and within characters are usually signposted. In some modern plays (e.g. those of Pinter) the tensions may include obscure, external threats. These tensions, conflicts or threats are virtually universal features of drama, informing both character development and the structure of a play.

In the middle part of a play (sometimes defined as 'the complication') the internal and/or external conflicts build, progressively affecting the characters, who thus become more fully realised. At this stage the characters may be faced with choices as to their actions and their interaction with others. As a result of their response to these choices, a **climax** or **crisis** point is reached, when the final outcome may hang in the balance, but events must turn one way or another.

In the **dénouement** (or 'unravelling') there is an inevitable resolution of crisis, tension and plot, as the characters' actions, interactions and decisions produce their ultimate consequences, leading to the end, or **closure**, of the play.

Such is a common, but by no means universal structural pattern. Among the plays here selected for study, for example, *Britannia Rules* and *Tally's Blood* are structurally conventional. *Amang the Craws* does not have a chronological structure, but makes extensive use of

flashback to move the action back and forward in time and place. *The 3 Estaites* broadly follows the pattern (much condensed) of the original allegorical morality play. Some modern plays have a loose, or episodic structure, and some may have no clear ‘ending’ as such, but may simply stop, or close enigmatically or ambiguously.

From what has been said, it may be seen that drama, like prose fiction, deals primarily with the exploration and working out of **relationships**:

A talent for drama is not a talent for writing, but is an ability to articulate human relationships. (Gore Vidal)

Vidal’s view is a provocative over-simplification, but it highlights the essence of drama. It deals with people’s ideas, thoughts, moods and feelings; it explores how different relationships affect the course of lives; it enacts the search for love and fulfilment; it demonstrates how relationships may be easy to destroy and difficult to resurrect; it exploits the tension in relationships between the ideal and the real; it dissects the effects on the individual of social and family structures.

Within most plays, as in other literary genres, a significant element is the development of **themes**. In drama a theme may be defined as an underlying but unifying social, political or moral idea that permeates and is embedded in the action and conflicts of the play. In effective writing, themes will not be overt: they will emerge unforced from the personal values of the author and infiltrate the consciousness of the reader/audience. Where themes are blatant the result is propaganda; where they are subtle they illuminate the human condition. Common themes in drama may relate to the individual and society, alienation, childhood, family relationships (marriage, parent/offspring), growing up, love and the approach of death. In the four plays selected here for study a variety of themes becomes apparent. In both *Britannia Rules* and *Tally’s Blood* World War Two is a backcloth to the action and its effects influence the characters and relationships. *Britannia Rules* highlights themes of changing relationships and social status; *Tally’s Blood* leads us to reflect on racial prejudice, the status of women in society, the importance of family, and the redeeming power of love; *Amang the Craws* raises issues of responsibility and the destructive power of love; *The 3 Estaites* is concerned with the constant and fundamental battle between good and evil. Section 5 offers some exemplification of these themes.

Unlike prose fiction, plays are designed for **performance**, whether on the stage, on television or on radio. It follows that the text of the play is

a blueprint for performance by its interpreters – the director, the stage technicians and the actors. Performance presupposes an audience, and stage performance presumes a live audience whose presence and responses to the actors become an integral part of a production, affecting and contributing to each realisation of the play by the performers.

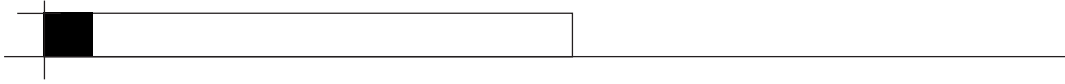
Reading drama is a very different activity from that of seeing it live. As we have seen, the text of the play is not the play, far less the theatrical experience, which varies from one performance to the next, and from one interpretation to another. Nonetheless, drama is an accepted literary genre, and the reading of it is an entirely legitimate and highly rewarding pursuit. Some plays are more obviously ‘literary’ than others – those of Shaw, for example, often seem designed as much to be read as enacted, and the author’s own voice is a constant presence. Many plays repay repeated re-readings and ponderings: Shakespeare is the supreme example, but the principle applies equally to the works of many playwrights, such as Chekhov, Ibsen, Arthur Miller and Samuel Beckett.

In reading, the ‘staging’ of the play takes place in the reader’s imagination, using whatever information the playwright provides in stage directions to establish the scene, and based on an understanding and experience of how plays work in the round. While such experience may be limited, and derived mainly from seeing televised rather than live drama, there is nevertheless a natural process by which the words of the text become the utterances of characters dramatically realised in the reader’s mind. From text and stage directions, much can be fleshed out about tone of voice, emphasis, facial and physical expression, gesture and movement. Ideally, the reader becomes the director of his/her own (internal) production of the play, giving body to the signals, both explicit and implicit, that are inherent in the text.

The obvious advantages for a reader are that he/she can approach the play at leisure, re-reading scenes and sections as necessary, reflecting on aspects of the writer’s craft, and particularly on the uses of **language**. Indeed, in the English classroom the study of the language of the play will be the first concern, examining aspects such as the correlation between language and character, shifts in tone and mood, the uses of imagery and humour, and the effects of dialect. The disadvantages of ‘merely’ reading are that the reader is denied what is unique to live theatre – where, for example, an apparently mundane text is brought to vibrant life through the art and professional skills of the actors, who reveal to the audience not just the text, but the sub-texts of the dialogue

– the dynamics of relationships that lie beneath the dialogue itself. Students should refer to the Drama Learning and Teaching Guides for *Britannia Rules*, *Tally's Blood*, *Aman the Crows* and *The 3 Estaites* for insight into acting skills, and whenever opportunity arises they should aim to sharpen their critical acumen by attending live performances.

The sections that follow offer a guide to the detailed study of the selected texts. The first four sections deal sequentially with the main structural phases of the plays. Section 5 examines significant features, such as theme, character and language, and Section 6 invites the student to look in more depth at a key scene from each play. In the Appendix a short extract from each play is followed by a question for textual analysis.



SECTION 1

Openings

In the opening scene of *Shanghaied* – the first part of *Britannia Rules* – Liz Lochhead uses Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain’s historic 3 September 1939 radio broadcast to the nation to establish the setting in time. Throughout the play her notes and stage directions are critical to its staging. The thunderclap and the lights fading up on three frightened children immediately create tension. The dialogue that follows quickly establishes an identifiable pecking order among the children, the common experience three of them share in leaving family and familiar surroundings, and the sibling relationship between Billy and Morag. Emily is the key to the setting of place, environment and class (well symbolised by the bowl of exotic fruit), and a contrast is clearly made between her and the other three children. It also becomes apparent that things will not be easy for Hughie. By the end of the scene a sound basis for dramatic momentum and character development has been set in place.

The opening scene of *Tally’s Blood* sets the context for the play by use of visual and musical ‘clues’: the black armband, the soft playing of *Santa Lucia*, and the mourning bell. The audience quickly grasps the circumstances of Lucia’s adoption and recognises the relationships among the three characters. This opening scene could almost be in mime – only four words are spoken, and those in Italian.

Scene Two moves the action forward three years. We see the same three characters in the Pedreschis’ back shop. The beginnings of conflict are sown: Lucia is evidently spoiled; the arrival of Franco, Massimo’s brother, presages both the Scottish/Italian conflict and Rosinella’s prejudice.

In the opening of *Amang the Crows* the audience is immediately presented with ‘two distinct acting areas’ – a clue to the shifts of time and place on which the play’s action is built. When the lawyer, Greg Andersen, says:

Just you, her and me. And I’m invisible. Mute.

he hints at the centrality of the relationship between Donnie and *her*, Donnie’s mother. The stage directions for Donnie – *adjusts his jacket...*

clears his throat and generally prepares himself... – and his little repetitions – *No, no... Yeab... Yeab* – make the audience aware of his growing nervousness at the prospect of seeing his mother again.

The 3 Estaites begins with The Proclamation. This unusual opening is, in effect, the ‘trailer’ to the play itself. Diligence, the Herald, announces the play, its venue (the open air), and urges the audience to enjoy themselves. He is joined by Cottar, Mrs Cottar, Finlay the Fitba Fan, and the Fool. The Cottars represent us, the ordinary people, and give us our first taste of the bawdy comedy that characterises much of the humour in the play. Such is the tenor of the Proclamation.

The underlying seriousness of the play and the abstract nature of the conflict are established in **Scene 1: Prologue**. We are told by Diligence that King Humanity, disturbed by the misrule that has for too long governed, wishes that the thrie estaites of Spirituality, Merchants and Temporality *to his Grace mak their obedience* – i.e. answer to the King. He prophesies that this injunction will result in complainings, lamentings, banishments and rejections, and asks the audience to be patient. With humorous contemporary references, he urges us to silence our watches and mobile phones, refrain from taking photographs, and hear out the pleas and counterpleas. Thus, from this opening we are made aware not only of the representational and abstract nature of the play but also of its relevance to the here-and-now. This approach to dramatic narrative, deriving from the conventions of the morality play, may be unfamiliar to a modern audience, but the contemporary references capture our attention.

* * *

The assignments that follow all relate to the openings of the texts. After the first assignment (on *Britannia Rules*) we make suggestions about how students may approach it. These suggestions may be used as a guide for tackling similar assignments in this and subsequent sections.

***Britannia Rules* – Scene One Assignment**

In the opening scene of *Britannia Rules* how does Lochhead establish setting, character, context and the way forward for dramatic development? You should pay attention to stage directions and dialogue, and identify aspects of language.

This assignment aims to give you experience in making a close analysis of a scene. As a first step, make a note of what you find out in the opening scene about the characters and setting.

The likelihood is that you will end up with a list something like this:

- It is wartime (World War Two).
- The three children are poorly clad.
- They are evacuees.
- Billy (10 years) and Morag (7 years) are brother and sister.
- They are in a very large, rather frightening building.
- Someone whom they deem to be in charge has put them there.
- Billy and Morag pick on Hughie; Hughie seems to be an outsider.
- The siblings and Hughie do not know each other.
- They re-enact the shared experience of the journey to the countryside.
- They exchange information about themselves.
- Emily, who lives in the huge house, prepares herself for the arrival of evacuees.
- Billy, Morag and Hughie see fruit known to them only in books.
- The fruit turns out not to be real.
- The evacuee children encounter Emily.

Further to this 'identifying' task, examine what else is achieved by stage directions, dialogue, language (particularly dialect) and the use of flashback.

It will be helpful to consider:

- shifts in relationships
- shifts in tone
- characterisation.

It will also help to ask questions of the text – e.g.

- What does this episode with the bowl of fruit tell us about the three characters and their relationships? (pages 26–29)
- What is the dramatic function of Rufus in this scene?

* * *

Tally's Blood – Scene Two

Re-read the scene and list the ways in which di Mambro foreshadows developments of character and plot.

* * *

Among the Crows – Scene Two

Scene One (set in the present) creates in the audience a sense of anticipation about the entrance of Donnie's mother. Scene Two (set in the past) brings Maggie's first appearance, at the farm with Iris and Meg.

Make notes on both the direct and indirect characterisation of Maggie.

Direct: as shown in Maggie's own words, tone and actions;
 Indirect: as shown by the picture of Maggie created by Iris and Meg.

* * *

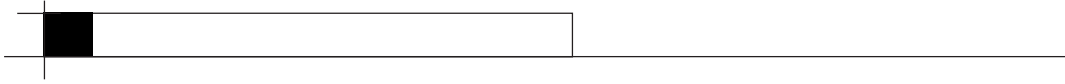
The 3 Estaites – Scene 2

The moral dilemma introduced in Scene 2 is readily apparent as King Humanity's courtiers, Wantonness, Chill-oot and Solace have their say. Having heard the King's opening prayer:

Therefore, my Lord, I heartily thee exhort
To give me grace to use my diadem
To thy pleasure and to my own comfort. (page 16)

the audience appreciates the irony of his keeping such company.

Paying close attention to Spence's use of language, trace the 'argument' presented to King Humanity by Wantonness, Chill-oot and Solace.



SECTION 2

Developments

The opening of a play gives a context for the action and pointers as to the themes, conflicts and plot development that lie ahead. It is the characters, however, and their developing relationships that lead us through the narrative. With true dramatic irony, they often provide the audience with an insight and understanding that they themselves lack.

* * *

Scene Two of *Shanghaied* sees the four children ‘settling’ into roles, and laying down markers for their relationships. (Note, too, the 3:1 dynamic of the interactions.) The children’s exchanges are animated, but, with the exception of Emily, there is a disconcertingly untethered quality to their dialogue that reflects the impact of their shared experience: evacuees, removed completely from the familiarity of family and the home environment.

Select the dialogue of just one of the three evacuees and look closely at the language to identify how it contributes to the humour and strangeness of the situation.

* * *

In *Tally’s Blood* the dynamic character Rosinella, who is on stage most of the time, is consistently the centre of our attention. She is the pivot around whom the other characters revolve. The fulcrum she provides, however, is not a moral one: she is clearly flawed and lacking in self-knowledge. These very shortcomings, and their potential for calamity, make her a compelling character. As the drama unfolds she eventually learns to find a new Rosinella. Lucia, on the other hand, exerts a different kind of influence on events:

- *pages 12–17*. Consider Lucia’s dialogue. What does it convey of her character, and what impact may such a character have in the play?
- *pages 30–33*. What is foreshadowed here in the relationships between Lucia and the adults? What are the thematic

implications of the dialogue between Massimo, Rosinella and Lucia?

- *pages 39–48*. What parallels does di Mambro seem to be drawing between Franco and Bridget, and between Lucia and Hughie?

* * *

Among the Crows has a completely different dramatic structure from *Tally's Blood* in that the action starts towards the end of the play's time-frame. It proceeds by alternating between flashbacks to the farmhouse and the present-day scene in the prison. In a sense, once Barron has opened with the first scene in the prison, 'the only way forward is back': the rest of the play has to make sense of the tone, the mood and the questions raised in this opening scene. The use of flashback, therefore, is a narrative device.

Like Donnie in the opening scene, we are waiting to meet his mother, and in Scene Two she makes her appearance. The language of Maggie's dialogue in Scene Two quickly alerts us to Donnie's problem. There is a brevity and bleak hardness to her utterances, and she makes statements rather than conversation.

What does this scene tell us?

In Scene Three, once Greg Andersen has moved his chair into a corner, the dialogue between mother and son is revealing.

Look at pages 21–26. What do we learn about the two characters and their relationship? It is worth keeping in mind Greg Andersen's final lines at the very end of the play (page 92):

No. No, you are right, Mrs Finlayson. I didn't realise it until today, but your son isn't the real *villain*. He's just another victim.

* * *

Further development of the action in *The 3 Estaites* takes a very different form from that in the three other plays. It explores a moral argument through the presentation of opposed forces, whose qualities are embodied in characters. King Humanity, having declared his wish to rule well, is foiled by his courtiers, Wantonness, Chill-oot, Solace and Sensuality, who wish to continue with the sexual licence enjoyed by the church. Humanity then succumbs to Sensuality's seductiveness:

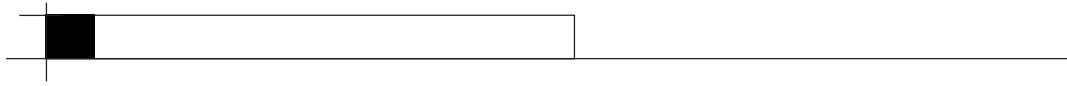
Forsooth, I know not how it stands,
My body has its own commands,
I tremble in my feet and hands
And burn as hot as fire. (page 24)

Sensuality's words to the King are emollient and seductive:

O potent prince, renowned for pulchritude,
May the god Cupid preserve thee, by all guid,
And may Dame Venus keep thee in beatitude... (page 29)

In a parallel narrative (and with more bluntness of language), Wantonness and Hameliness also move into the chamber. The moral harmony of the realm is threatened. The dramatic question is: can Guid Counsel (Scene 8) 'mak some repair'? In Scene 8 he seems isolated, particularly after the entrance of the Vices.

Re-read Scenes 4–7 and note the 'softening up' by the courtiers of King Humanity for Sensuality. Identify the means by which the Vices ingratiate themselves with the King in Scene 10.



SECTION 3

Moving to crises

In *Shanghaied* Hughie's alienation becomes clearer as the play proceeds. In Scenes Three and Four, his vulnerability is further revealed in the references to what their daddies are doing in the war (pages 40–42) and by the absence of Hughie's mammy. His outsider status is confirmed in *Elizabeth* in the reflections on the budgie (page 89):

I saw a wee green budgie wance among a flock of starlings. Must've escaped. ...

It was trying to feed, you know, coming doon for crumbs ... But thae starlings widnae let it. Even the wee sparras harassed it, piking away at it, drawing blood. ...

See, their coloured feathers draws attention to them and the other birds don't like it. It's cos they're different.

This anecdote and its imagery, seen against the talk of the toughness of the army, anticipate the appearance of Hughie (page 98) resplendent as Britannia. Hughie is that wee green budgie. But he has found his voice:

I'm thrilled to be second. Honestly. ...

Do you know what? I'm just going to go home like this and my Da can just like it or lump it.

The two plays that make up *Britannia Rules* – *Shanghaied* and *Elizabeth* – contain clear parallels. Not only are the four young characters central to both plays, but so too is the War. Despite the fact that *Elizabeth* is set in 1953 at the time of the Queen's coronation, there is still a wartime 'feel' to it in the talk of the army and national service. The most important parallel, however, is in the coming together of two different social classes. In *Shanghaied*, in 1939, it is the presence of three Glasgow evacuees from the tenements in the rural and financial privilege of a stately home in the Scottish countryside. In *Elizabeth* it is the

Get the debutante (page 70)

appearance of Emily in an environment completely alien to her, as she seeks support and rescue. This is Emily's crisis.

Elizabeth moves the children's drama forward fourteen years. It also gives us Auntie Betty – solid, sane, unselfish – and an important anchor to the four young people. Scene Two of *Elizabeth* will be considered more closely in Section 6.

Look again at Scene One of *Elizabeth*. How does Lochhead create the context into which Emily makes her appearance? You should consider the occasion, the characters and how they relate to each other, what they say to each other, the language in which they speak, and the tone Lochhead establishes. It might be helpful to read this scene aloud with a partner.

* * *

Scene Seven of *Tally's Blood* brings crises. For Rosinella it is the dismay she feels at the blossoming love between Franco and Bridget. Her prejudice is voiced in strong terms; it is a prejudice based on racism, and it is directed against the people of the country in which she lives. For Massimo – in ironic juxtaposition – the crisis is the news on the radio that

This country's at war against Germany. (page 50)

Rosinella's response reveals much about Rosinella:

But it's got nothing to do with us, Massimo. We're Italian, we just live here. It's not our country. (page 50)

The reality of war and its direct impact on the family are seen in Act One, Scenes Eight to Ten (pages 51–58), when Franco explains to those close to him that he has joined up, and says goodbye.

Further crisis – this time for Bridget – emerges in Act One, Scene Eleven, where we guess that she is pregnant by Franco. The full implications of this scene are made clear later in Act Two, Scene Nine (pages 140–146). The contrasting treatment given to Bridget by Rosinella and then by Massimo is clearly shown in the earlier scenes. From this we begin to recognise that Massimo will be the catalyst for Rosinella's redemption.

Local racism against the Italians results in the violent attack on the shop that stuns the Pedreschi family. Worse soon follows in the arrest of Massimo. These incidents, however, seem tangential to what is happening to the characters themselves, as they try to make sense of something that seems not to be a part of them. In response to Hughie's reading:

It says here... 'enemy aliens'...

Rosinella replies:

That cannie mean Massimo. Surely. Your Uncle Massimo's no an 'enemy', eh Lucia? They must be OK, eh? I mean they're no 'enemies'.
(page 77)

Read again carefully Act One, Scene Sixteen. What is revealed of the two women in this scene? You should consider stage directions as well as dialogue. If possible, read this scene aloud with a partner.

Act Two of *Tally's Blood* moves the action forward twelve years. Much that was foreshadowed in Act One becomes reality. Massimo visits Italy alone; Rosinella steadfastly opposes the growing friendship of Lucia and Hughie (clearly shown in her refusal to let Lucia go with Hughie to his sister Charmaine's wedding). As Rosinella insists:

And the way they love their families. Nobody loves their families like the Italians. (page 103)

The irony of her treatment of Hughie, and his shy conscientiousness with regard to his own family are not lost on us. In fact Rosinella's prejudice and racism, particularly against Hughie, gather weight and venom. The incident with Hughie's letter shows Rosinella in a starkly unpleasant light. And it is only the coincidental arrival of Luigi's letter from Italy that distracts us from the ugliness of the scene. The following scene (Act Two, Scene Seven), where Hughie and Lucia share a bottle of ginger, gives welcome light relief.

Read Act Two, Scene Seven carefully and comment on di Mambro's dramatic intentions.

Scene Nine (particularly pages 140–146 and 148–149) is critical to the regeneration of Rosinella. Because of the changes wrought in her, the consequences of the drama are not tragic. This scene will be considered in more detail in Section 6.

* * *

In Scene Four of *Among the Crows* we meet Linda for the first time. The scene is worth looking at closely. Linda is pivotal to the whole play, and she performs a critical role in this scene in giving us access to the characters of the other three women: it is as if each one sees her only to pre-judge her. In this scene and in Scenes Six and Eight (which are a continuation), it becomes apparent not only that Meg, Iris and Maggie form some kind of unity (rather like a dramatic chorus) in relation to Linda, but also that their attitude to her is determined by their relationship to Donnie.

When we first meet Donnie in the past (page 40), we begin to appreciate the inevitability of his predicament in the present. Meg's reflections on why Maggie is as she is (pages 45–47) fill in gaps in our understanding. Donnie's belief in his own charm and in getting his own way, however precarious, is still central to him. The symbolic incident with the bike (pages 69–70) anticipates his relationship with women, including the associated violence. But we could not have predicted the tragic consequences of his always getting his own way.

Consider why Barron focuses on Linda's narrative in the play, rather than on Marilou's (which is confined to a mention), when Donnie is in fact in prison for the murder of Marilou.

What important dramatic functions are served by the characters Meg, Iris, and Greg Andersen? Trace and examine the dialogue of each of these three characters as he or she appears and try to determine his or her role. In your analysis consider language and tone as well as narrative.

* * *

The self-interest that is at large in *The 3 Estaites* inevitably provokes crises. The Vices, Flattery, Falsehood and Deceit, seek out King Humanity to keep him from Guid Counsel.

By God, I'll find a thousand wiles!
We'll turn our coats and change our styles.
We'll mak disguise, that nae man ken us.

The humour of the Vices' attempts to disguise themselves (pages 36–38) gives them a paradoxical appeal to the audience. They are welcomed by Humanity, who gives them jobs at court, and they manage to prevent Guid Counsel from seeing the King. The entrance of Verity in Scene 13 renews hope for King Humanity:

I have the greatest hopes for his good grace.
When he becomes acquainted well with me,
Honour and glory he will soon embrace. (pages 45–46)

But the Vices enlist the help of the Spiritual estate. Given the hypocrisy and corruption of the Thrie Estaites, it is an unequal battle: Verity is put in the stocks, where, thanks to the influence of Sensuality on the King, Chastity joins her. And so the crisis continues.

Look closely at Scene 14, which demonstrates Spence's ability to use language to create character and humour. Give examples of how he achieves his effects.

With the entry of Correction's Varlet in Scene 16 there is the hint of a turning point. The Varlet gives Correction a good build-up:

And so far as I understand,
He shall reform throughout this land
Even all the Three Estaites.
God furth of Heaven him did send
To punish all that do offend
Against His Majesty. (page 57)

And the Vices flee. Divine Correction himself does not disappoint. His first speech (pages 60–61) sets out his even-handed approach to justice:

What is a king? Nocht but an officer
To cause his lieges live in equity,
And under God to be the punisher
Of trespassers against His majesty. (page 61)

Correction is shown to be just, rather than merely punitive. He approaches the King, banishes Sensuality, and the King receives Guid Counsel, Chastity and Verity, Correction's natural allies.

In Part Two, Poor Man enters for the first time. He represents the oppression of the poor by church and state:

The Bishop took the best cow by the heid,
Quick as ye like when my faither was deid.
And when the Bishop heard tell that my mother
Was deid as well, he took from me another. (page 75)

When the Thrie Estaites enter backwards accompanied by their Vices on their way to the Parliament, it is clear that they are not yet ready for 'correction':

And if you please to do. Sir, as we say,
Postpone this Parliament till another day.
For why? The people of this region
Will not endure extreme correction. (page 85)

But Correction insists

That every man oppressed table a bill. (page 85)

This signals the entry of Jane the Common-weil, who represents the ordinary man and woman of Scotland. Using rich language she points the finger at the three Vices. Falsehood and Deceit are put in the stocks but Flattery hides in the Spiritual Estaite. There then follows the important Debate, Scene 26, in which both sides put their cases and Divine Correction, with the help of the testimony of Jane and Poor Man, restores order. It seems that the crises are moving towards resolution – except that Flattery once again turns the tables and escapes.

Finally, Folly makes a late and humorous entrance. His language is of the people and his references are local and topical. In the tradition of wise fools, he recognises the fool in all of us, even in the King himself.

Look again at Scene 25. What is the tone of Jane the Common-weil's complaint? (Try reading the scene aloud with a partner.) How does this scene dramatically foreshadow the scene that follows?

SECTION 4

Dénouements

The two plays that make up *Britannia Rules* present two periods in the lives of the four young people: their childhood and early adulthood; there is nothing in between. But dramatically there is no need for the years between. The clear markers of character in *Shanghaied* are translated to *Elizabeth* so that the four young people are seen to be the inheritors of their earlier characters.

Look closely at *Elizabeth*, Scene Eight. In what ways do you consider this a fitting final scene for the two plays? You should take into account characters, themes, narrative, language and structure.

* * *

Despite the undercurrents of tragedy in *Tally's Blood*, and the seriousness of its themes, there is a strong sense of optimism in the play. To some extent this optimism derives from the fact that Lucia herself represents hope and strength. As we see from the beginning she is feisty – even if spoiled. Despite Rosinella's best efforts at persuasion, Lucia will not share her prejudices against the Scots – perhaps because, unlike Rosinella, she grew up in Scotland. The love of Hughie and Lucia will not follow the same path as the love of Franco and Bridget; it will not be cut short by war; it will not be doomed by prejudice. Most important of all in the play, however, is the power of love – for this is a love story. Massimo's love for Rosinella not only brings her to her senses but also brings her back to him. Bridget's love for Franco gives her the strength to tell Rosinella everything – a turning point in the play.

Look closely again at Act One, Scene Two (pages 12–19). At the start of a play, aspects of theme, character, and narrative begin to emerge. These are realised in the course of the action. Take one (or two) of these aspects and show how di Mambro develops them.

* * *

The present-to-past-to-present structure of *Amang the Crows* means that the dénouement is with us from the beginning; in a sense the play itself teases out the answer to the question ‘Why?’. The juxtaposition of the last two scenes (pages 86–92), makes for sharp contrasts – not only of place and time, but also of tone.

Examine Scenes Fourteen and Fifteen, looking particularly at both dialogue and stage directions, and show how the playwright creates the impact of the final scene.

* * *

In *The 3 Estaites* Spence uses language to define and flesh out character and to create tone – particularly comic tone. Scene 22, in which Flattery supervises the Soutars’ divorce, is a good example of his craft in creating character. We see not only the formation of the bawdy Mr and Mrs Soutar, but also the rounding out of the character of Flattery. Like the other characters who represent qualities, Flattery is no mere cipher, but identifiably himself – and palpably real. Even Folly, who comes in only at the end of the play to draw it to a close, is convincingly drawn.

Look again at Folly’s sermon, Scene 30, and comment on Folly’s character, indicating the ways in which Spence has made him more than just a cipher.

SECTION 5

Themes, characters, relationships and language

Generally, in drama, themes are presented to us through incident, characters, relationships and language – all of which interact with the narrative. There are several dominant and significant themes in these four plays.

* * *

Lochhead's plays in *Britannia Rules* are essentially about relationships within particular historical and social settings. The dialogue explores the ways in which relationships form, shift and coalesce. In *Shanghaied* the relationships of the four children are played out against extraordinary circumstances: the billeting of evacuees in wartime Scotland; in *Elizabeth* the dramatic impetus is the appearance of debutante Emily out of her own privileged milieu. Billy's communist plea towards the end of the plays is the culmination of an important motif:

Just people. Exactly the same ...

Once the ... you know ... thingummy, the ... property and power relations are eliminated, yeah, just people. (page 109)

– but the irony of his self-deception is not lost on us. These four young people do live in the same times – of war, or the celebration of a coronation; they are all subject to the same human needs and desires; they all make mistakes and sacrifices. Billy's assertion of 'sameness', however, is based not on any objective view, but on his compelling need to impress Emily.

Look carefully at the dialogue between Billy and Emily in Scene Five of *Elizabeth* and comment on its relevance to character and theme in the two plays.

How does the language of the dialogue indicate shifts in tone? Examine particularly Billy's use of language and the ways in which it changes during the scene. What are the reasons for these changes (some of which are slight)? Again, it may be helpful to read the scene with a partner.

* * *

In *Tally's Blood* several ideas permeate the play: racial prejudice, in a Scottish–Italian context, played out in the shadow of war; the role and fulfilment of women; the importance of family; the redeeming power of love. In many ways Rosinella embodies all these themes – as, to a lesser extent, does Bridget.

Almost all the scenes in which Rosinella is present have a bearing on the principal themes of the play. Look, for instance, at Scene Eleven, page 59, and Scene Seventeen, page 87. In these episodes Rosinella presents two very different facets of her character. The episode with Bridget in Scene Eleven shows Rosinella entrenched in her prejudice. It is instructive to follow closely her line of reasoning and the language she uses. In pursuing her own prejudiced line of thought she does not respond to Bridget's quest for news of Franco, and ignores Bridget's desperate need to get in touch with him:

What's this war got to do with him, eh? You tell me that. He's an Italian ... (page 60)

What got into him, eh, made him forget where he really belongs? (*Looking at Bridget directly*) Who was it turned his head, that's what I'd like to know. (page 60)

Three times in this scene she uses the phrase 'you girls', which is indicative of her tone and attitude. And while she does not actually condone Franco's treatment of 'Scotch girls', she accepts that it is part of his being Italian:

So he took you out a couple of times. Don't think that means anything. Franco, he's Italian, he's played around a wee bit with some Scotch girls – so what? You're not the first and you won't be the last. (page 60)

She also emphasises to Bridget the difference between Scottish and Italian girls:

Do you think that if Italian girls were allowed out, if they got doing all the things you girls do – do you think for one minute Franco would have looked twice at you? (page 60)

It is a cruel speech, but not an intentional cruelty, because it is an expression of her belief. She is too prejudiced, too self-absorbed to see

what she doesn't want to see – that two people might genuinely love each other. There is a parallel in Act Two, in her determination not to see the genuineness of the relationship that is developing between Lucia and Hughie.

Scene Seventeen shows the softer, more loving side of Rosinella, as she helps Lucia into her confirmation dress. Lucia looks like a young bride and Rosinella's thoughts turn to her own love for Massimo. It is a touching scene that echoes the early episode in which the very young Lucia tries on a party dress. It also foreshadows Lucia's marriage at the end of the play, as does Rosinella's lively telling of the story of her running away with Massimo:

My daddy was screaming and shouting at the top of his voice and calling me for everything. And the next morning the priest rang the bell – (*She mimics the sound*) 'Do-ing, Do-ing, Do-ing' ... (page 90)

It is dramatically fitting that at precisely this point Massimo returns.

Examine Rosinella's speeches in Act One, Scene Seventeen. With a partner, discuss the dramatic importance of these speeches to the play as a whole.

* * *

In *Amang the Craws* there is a completely different interpretation of love and of the role of women. In this play love is seen as a destructive power – both in Maggie's upbringing of Donnie and in Donnie's treatment of the younger women, who represent for him merely a sexual interest, and the chance to impose his power. His treatment of his mother and the older women in the play differs markedly.

Ask yourself why this is so.

Another important theme explored in the play – mainly through the characters and relationship of Donnie and Maggie – is responsibility. Scenes Five and Nine give us insight into how each of them views responsibility. Associated questions are also raised about truth, and how we construct our own self-serving 'truths'.

Look again at the word choice in Scene Five. What is the cumulative effect of the language of ‘if-onlys’ and blame? For example:

... if I’d stayed in Scotland ...

... not blaming you ...

If he’d even been in a state that doesn’t have the chair.

I deserve better ...

... that stupid Linda’s fault.

... bunch of lousy lawyers. (pages 33–35)

Examine the language of the dialogue in Scene Nine and identify how Donnie shifts from self-pity and insecurity to making accusations to his lawyer, then back to self-pity.

* * *

General Assignments for *Britannia Rules*, *Tally’s Blood*, *Among the Crows*

The following assignments are based on questions set in previous years’ Higher English.

1. Select a play that focuses on human relationships and show how the drama explores not only relationships but also themes of universal significance.
2. Choose a play that explores aspects of the status of women in society and show how the dramatist reveals them to be either victims or dominant figures.
3. From a play you have studied, examine the techniques the dramatist uses to create a minor character that is influential in the development of the play.

* * *

In *The 3 Estaites* the main theme, under which all others are subsumed, is the battle between Good and Evil. The manifestations of evil are shown in the abuses of power and office: the corruption of the Thrie Estaites, the mal-distribution of wealth, and the oppression of the poor. The manifestations of good are found in the characters whose persistence in the cause of justice and fairness for the people is ultimately rewarded – e.g. Divine Correction, Jane the Common-weil.

The relationships between characters are expressed in moral, social, political, religious and sexual terms – primary colours. The subtleties of these relationships lie mainly in the language and shifts in tone that Spence uses to create and to reveal character.

Look again at Scene 9, the entrance of the Vices. Here we meet Flattery, one of the ‘baddies’. Examine Flattery’s speeches and make a case both for and against him.

* * *

General Assignment for *The 3 Estaites*

Analyse the various ways in which Spence creates comedy. You should consider his creation of comic characters, the language used (including dialect), slapstick, the direct addresses to the audience, and the interaction of the comic and the serious.



SECTION 6**Key scenes**

In this section, we have selected for close study a key scene from each play. For each scene a number of questions and points are raised in order to promote understanding not only of the scene, but also of the play as a whole.

* * *

Britannia Rules – Elizabeth – Scene Two (pages 72–86)

This scene introduces us to Auntie Betty – and reintroduces us to Billy.

- Examine closely the stage directions and Auntie Betty’s monologue on page 72. What are your first impressions of her?
- From Billy’s initial question and the ensuing dialogue between him and Auntie Betty, what do we learn of the relationship between them up to the point where Billy says:

And don’t you cast up either, well! (page 75)?

- Identify the points at which Auntie Betty tries to ‘control’ Billy – and the points at which he prevails, or turns the tables on her.
- What overall impression do we have of the relationship between Billy and Auntie Betty at the point when Emily enters?
- What do you make of the very different responses of Billy and Auntie Betty to Emily’s request for a bath?
- How does Emily’s entrance affect Billy, and what does his response tell us about him?
- What further understanding of Billy do Morag and Hughie give us?
- What is symbolic about the escape of the budgie?
- What does the incident of the dress contribute to our understanding of the characters and the social situation? How does

the language of the dialogue of this scene reinforce our understanding of character and social situation?

* * *

***Tally's Blood* – Act Two, Scene Nine** (pages 140–149)

This scene marks a terrible time of reckoning for Rosinella. Just as she is trying to come to terms with Lucia's having been 'claimed' by her father, Luigi, Bridget tells her about the baby. Rosinella then undergoes a genuine change of heart. Her antagonism towards Hughie softens; she also tells Massimo that she wants to go to Italy. Massimo, however, finally rounds on her for her selfishness.

- What brings on Rosinella's anger, first against Hughie, then Bridget?
- What makes Bridget tell Rosinella about the baby?
- What makes Bridget's speech about the abortion (pages 145–6) so powerful?
- What other aspects of Massimo's character are revealed in the remainder of the scene?
- There are several changes of mood in this scene. How does di Mambro convey these changes?

* * *

***Amang the Crows* – Scene Eight** (pages 50–62)

This scene reveals different perceptions of the role of women – particularly in relation to men – both in the dialogue and in the action.

- How does Barron succeed in making Iris's speech (on page 53) particularly chilling?
- How does Barron convey:

Linda's incredulity about Iris's point of view;

Linda's altered view of Donnie?

- How does Barron convey the lack of clear communication between Linda and Donnie?
- What is the point of the episode with 'the bacon'?

* * *

The 3 Estaites – Scenes 21 and 23

The Debate in Scene 26 is central to the battle between good and evil. This scene, however, is examined in the Learning and Teaching Guide for Drama.

Here we look at two other key scenes: Scene 21 (pages 73–76), where we meet Poor Man for the first time in the company of Diligence, and Scene 23, in which Poor Man and Flattery have an exchange. In both scenes we feel the force of the oppression of the poor – particularly by the Church.

Scene 21 marks the start of Part Two, where the Thrie Estaites will finally be brought to account.

- What mood characterises the exchange between Diligence and Poor Man (pages 73–4)?
- How effective is Poor Man's monologue (page 75) in putting the case against the Church?
- How does Diligence respond to Poor Man's plight?

In Scene 23 Poor Man meets the Pardoner.

- In what ways does the scene between the Pardoner and Poor Man exemplify the theme of the play?



Short extracts for textual analysis

By using some of the techniques developed in the previous sections – of questioning the text, close analysis of language, dialogue and structure, identification of tone, and attention to stage directions (where applicable) – you should be ready to analyse and comment upon aspects of the dramatists' craft.

* * *

1. *Britannia Rules – Elizabeth* – [from Scene Five (pages 105–107)]

EMILY: You do remember my home in Argyll?

BILLY: Obviously.

EMILY: Well, we were friends then. Or don't you remember that?

BILLY: Emily, there was a war on. We were evacuees. Billeted on you.
By the Government.

EMILY: We tried –

BILLY: Yeah, we were your war effort.

EMILY: Everybody pulled together then. Good times, that's what I
remember. You got your Socialist government after the War.

BILLY: Dear oh dear oh dear...

EMILY: And the Tories are back in now.

BILLY: Yes, despite the fact Labour got more votes!

Ach, but, Emily, that 'Labour Government' after the War, jeez
oh! – Clement Atlee an' auld Bevin and these auld coalition has-
beens, Christ! Telling you, they had about as much to do with
Socialism as... as... Winston Churchill does.

Socialism means the abolition of capitalism, right? Oh, but Labour leaders do not want to abolish capitalism, oh no, their, their, their so-called 'democratic socialism' – Ach, it is just nothing but a sham and ahint it they justify the same auld system, same auld shite. Profiteering and exploitation, riches for the very few, poverty and misery for the many.

EMILY: You speak like a pamphlet. A pamphlet someone hands you at Speakers' Corner, or –

BILLY: I want things to change.

EMILY: So do I! I'd like to overthrow the whole British system.

BILLY: Aye right!

EMILY: I took part in a demonstration against the government.

BILLY: When?

EMILY: In January. The night before Derek Bentley was hanged. I was staying in Chelsea at the time...

Question

How does Lochhead demonstrate in this extract the 'distance' between Emily and Billy? You should pay close attention not only to the content of what is said, but also to the speakers' language and tone.

* * *

2. *Tally's Blood* – [from Act Two, Scene Six (pages 126–128)]

ROSINELLA: What's this, eh? He's writing to you now, eh?

Rosinella opens it, takes it out.

ROSINELLA: I knew it. It's a letter.

She looks at it: frustrated because she can't read it: thrusts it back at Lucia.

ROSINELLA: What's it say?

LUCIA: I don't know – it doesn't matter. I'll just chuck it.

ROSINELLA: I want to know what it says. Read it for me.

LUCIA: Auntie Rosinella, I don't know what's wrong with you these days.

ROSINELLA: Just read it.

Lucia starts to read the letter: she has to think on her feet.

LUCIA: It's just... just a letter.

ROSINELLA: What's it say?

LUCIA: It just says... it just says... Have I heard the new Guy Mitchell... it's really good... he says... and eh... Would I ask my Uncle Massimo to get it for the juke box... because he thinks it would be good ... for the customers... So he does... and so do I... as well... I think so too.

ROSINELLA: I don't believe you.

LUCIA: No, it's good. You not heard it? *(Sings/tries to cajole)* 'I never felt more like singing the blues, cause I never thought that I'd ever lose your love, dear. You got me singing the blues. I never felt more like ...'

ROSINELLA: Give me that. *(Grabs letter)*

LUCIA: *(Pleading)* Auntie Rosinella.

ROSINELLA: Don't you 'Auntie Rosinella' me. I didn't want to have to do this but you're making me. I want you to stay away from that Hughie Devlin, you hear?

LUCIA: But why?

ROSINELLA: I don't want you seeing him.

LUCIA: Hughie's my pal.

ROSINELLA: I don't want you talking to him.

LUCIA: I don't understand.

ROSINELLA: Just stay away.

LUCIA: You can't make me.

ROSINELLA: Alright then, lady, I'll fix you. I'll get rid of him.

Question

How does di Mambro convey the battle of wills between the two women? You should consider all aspects of language – e.g. tone, repetition, pauses, as well as the content of what is said. You should also pay attention to stage directions.

* * *

3. *Amang the Crows* – [from Scene Twelve (pages 76–78)]

LINDA: He didn't 'knock me about a bit', Mrs Finlayson. (*Pause. She is still quiet and undramatic.*) He raped me.

MAGGIE: Na. Nae my Donnie.

But her voice reveals that she isn't surprised. It is almost as if she had always expected this.

LINDA: (*Matter-of-factly still.*) Everybody was out when I got home, so I couldn't borrow the car. I was going to go into town, you see, but I couldn't without the car. The bus would be too late for the shops, by the time it got in. So I'd thought I'd just get changed.

Pause. She shudders and then begins again.

Maybe he rang the doorbell, I don't know. I didn't hear it anyway, upstairs. I'd just taken my things off and I heard him, coming up the stairs, calling my name. I shouted to him to wait. I'd come down in a minute. But he came up. (*She looks at Maggie. She is more intense now, and a little nearer hysteria.*) He came in. Right into my room. I'd hardly anything on, and I was annoyed because he'd come in when I told him not to. So I shouted at him, told him

to go away. But he wouldn't. He took hold of me and tried to kiss me.

She breaks down and cries, quietly. Maggie watches, grim-faced, but silent until Linda recovers enough to continue.

I tried to push him away but he was holding on to me and shouting. He hit me and... and I fell. He was kneeling on me, then, and punching me, so I started hitting him but he didn't seem to notice. He was shouting the whole time and... I couldn't do anything. *(Long pause. She is quieter again, more controlled.)* I always thought I'd be able to cope if it happened to me. Hit the man hard enough to make him let go. Or talk him out of it, even. Or *something*. But... it wasn't the way you imagine. He was too strong. And he was *shouting* all the time.

Now she sobs, not loudly, but deeply and uncontrollably. Maggie is impassive. Eventually, the crying quietens.

MAGGIE: Where is he now?

LINDA: *(Not the question she expected. She is quiet and looks at Maggie.)* Still there. *(Pause.)* After... afterwards, he got off me and just stood there, watching me. I... I... just came away. He didn't follow me. I got a coat at the front door and came here.

MAGGIE: Why? *(Pause.)* Why here?

LINDA: I don't know. I thought you... you would help me.

MAGGIE: Have you told anyone else?

LINDA: *(Puzzled.)* I haven't seen anyone.

Question

This is a very tense episode for both women. How does Barron create the distance between them? You should examine closely the language of each woman – sentence length, the use of statement, the use of questions, broken and complete utterances. You should also consider the stage directions and how these help actors to interpret their roles.

* * *

4. *The 3 Estaites* – [from Part Two, Scene 24 (pages 82–85)]

WANTONNESS: So let us go and tell the King.
 (They turn to the King.)
 Sir, we have seen a marvellous thing
 By our judgement.

SOLACE: The Thrie Estaites of this region
 Are coming backwards through the toon
 To the Parliament!

KING HUMANITY: Backward? Backward? How may that be?
 Go speed them hastily to me
 For fear that they go wrang.

CHILL-OOT: Sir, I see them yonder coming –
 They're making moan, chanting and humming –
 As fast as they gang.

GUID COUNSEL: Sir, hold you still and scare them not
 Till you perceive what be their thought
 And what brought them to this.
 Then let the King Correction
 Mak a sharp inquisition
 To find out what's amiss.
 When ye ken the occasion
 That makes for this persuasion
 Ye may deal wi the cause,
 Then them reform as ye think best,
 So that the realm may live in rest
 According to God's laws.

BISHOP: Glory, honour, laud, triumph, victory
 Be to your mighty, prudent Excellence!
 Here are we come, all the Estaites Thrie,
 Ready to mak our due obedience
 At your command, with humble observance,
 As may pertain to Spirituality
 With counsel of the Temporality.

TEMPORALITY: Sir, we with mighty courage at command
 Of your superexcellent Majesty
 Shall mak service baith with our heart and hand,
 And shall not dread in your defence to die.

We are content, doubt not, that we may see
That noble heavenly King Correction
Make in his mercy retribution.

MERCHANT: Sir, your burgesses and merchant bands
Gie thanks to God that we may see your face,
Trusting we may now into far-off lands
Convey our goods with support of your Grace,
For now I trust we shall get rest and peace.
When rascals are with your sword overthrown,
Then loyal merchants live by trade alone.

CORRECTION: My tender friends, I pray you with my heart,
Declare to me and tell me without fear –
What is the reason you go backward?
The truth of this I want to hear.

BISHOP: Sovereign, we have gone this way mony a year.
And although you think we go not decently,
We think we make our way right pleasantly.

Question

How does Spence convey the moral 'gap' evident in this extract? Pay particular attention to the contrasts in the language and tone of the speakers. How does this short scene encapsulate the main themes of the play?