

PETER SHAFFER: *Equus*

- 1 **Either** (a) What, in your opinion, is the role and significance of Hesther in the play?
- Or** (b) With close reference to language and action, discuss the dramatic significance of the following passage, the opening to the play's second Act.

Darkness.

Lights come slowly up on ALAN kneeling in the night at the hooves of NUGGET. Slowly he gets up, climbing lovingly up the body of the horse until he can stand and kiss it.

DYSART sits on the downstage bench where he began Act One.

5

DYSART: With one particular horse, called Nugget, he embraces. He showed me how he stands with it afterwards in the night, one hand on its chest, one on its neck, like a frozen tango dancer, inhaling its cold sweet breath. 'Have you noticed', he said, 'about horses: how they'll stand one hoof on its end, like those girls in the ballet?'

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[ALAN leads NUGGET out of the square. DYSART rises. The horse walks away up the tunnel and disappears. The boy comes downstage and sits on the bench DYSART has vacated. DYSART crosses downstage and moves slowly up round the circle, until he reaches the central entrance to the square.]

15

Now he's gone off to rest, leaving me alone with Equus. I can hear the creature's voice. It's calling me out of the black cave of the Psyche. I shove in my dim little torch, and there he stands – waiting for me. He raises his matted head. He opens his great square teeth, and says – *[Mocking.]* 'Why? ... Why Me? ... Why – ultimately – Me? ... Do you really imagine you can account for Me? Totally, infallibly, inevitably account for Me? ... Poor Doctor Dysart!'

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[He enters the square.]

Of course I've stared at such images before. Or been stared at by them, whichever way you look at it. And weirdly often now with me the feeling is that *they* are staring at *us* – that in some quite palpable way they precede us. Meaningless, but unsettling ...

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In either case, this one is the most alarming yet. It asks questions I've avoided all my professional life. *[Pause.]* A child is born into a world of phenomena all equal in their power to enslave. It sniffs – it sucks – it strokes its eyes over the whole uncomfortable range. Suddenly one strikes. Why? Moments snap together like magnets, forging a chain of shackles. Why? I can trace them. I can even, with time, pull them apart again. But why at the start they were ever magnetized at all – just those particular moments of experience and no others – I don't know. *And nor does anyone else.* Yet *if* I don't know – if I can never know that – then what am I doing here? I don't mean clinically doing or socially doing – I mean *fundamentally!* These questions, these Whys, are fundamental – yet they have no place in a consulting room. So then, do I? ... This is the feeling more and more with me – No Place. Displacement ... 'Account for me,' says staring Equus. 'First account for Me! ...' I fancy this is more than menopause.

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[NURSE rushes in.]

- NURSE: Doctor! ... Doctor! There's a terrible scene with the Strang boy. His mother came to visit him, and I gave her the tray to take in. He threw it at her. She's saying the most dreadful things. 45
 [ALAN *springs up, down left*. DORA *springs up, down right*. They face each other across the bottom end of the stage. It is observable that at the start of this Act FRANK is not sitting beside his wife on their bench. It is hopefully not observable that he is placed among the audience up-stage, in the gloom, by the central tunnel. 50
- DORA: Don't you dare! *Don't you dare!*
- DYSART: Is she still there?
- NURSE: Yes!
 [He quickly leaves the square, followed by the NURSE. DORA moves towards her son.] 55
- DORA: Don't you look at me like that! I'm not a doctor, you know, who'll take anything. Don't you dare give me that stare, young man!
 [She slaps his face. DYSART joins them.]

Act 2, Scene 22

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *The Winter's Tale*

- 2 **Either** (a) Discuss the role and dramatic significance of Paulina in *The Winter's Tale*.
- Or** (b) How, and with what effects, does Shakespeare present the different worlds and values in the following extract? You should make close reference to both language and action.

POLIXENES:	[<i>To Shepherd</i>] O, father, you'll know more of that hereafter. [<i>To Camillo</i>] Is it not too far gone? 'Tis time to part them. He's simple and tells much. [<i>To Florize</i>] How now, fair shepherd! Your heart is full of something that does take Your mind from feasting. Sooth, when I was young	5
	And handed love as you do, I was wont To load my she with knacks; I would have ransack'd The pedlar's silken treasury and have pour'd it To her acceptance: you have let him go And nothing mated with him. If your lass Interpretation should abuse and call this Your lack of love or bounty, you were straited For a reply, at least if you make a care Of happy holding her.	10
FLORIZEL:	Old sir, I know	15
	She prizes not such trifles as these are. The gifts she looks from me are pack'd and lock'd Up in my heart, which I have given already, But not deliver'd. O, hear me breathe my life Before this ancient sir, whom, it should seem, Hath sometime lov'd. I take thy hand – this hand, As soft as dove's down and as white as it, Or Ethiopian's tooth, or the fann'd snow that's bolted By th' northern blasts twice o'er.	20
POLIXENES:	What follows this?	25
	How prettily the young swain seems to wash The hand was fair before! I have put you out. But to your protestation; let me hear What you profess.	
FLORIZEL:	Do, and be witness to't.	30
POLIXENES:	And this my neighbour too?	
FLORIZEL:	And he, and more Than he, and men – the earth, the heavens, and all: That, were I crown'd the most imperial monarch, Thereof most worthy, were I the fairest youth That ever made eye swerve, had force and knowledge More than was ever man's, I would not prize them Without her love; for her employ them all; Commend them and condemn them to her service Or to their own perdition.	35
POLIXENES:	Fairly offer'd.	40
CAMILLO:	This shows a sound affection.	
SHEPHERD:	But, my daughter, Say you the like to him?	

PERDITA:	I cannot speak	45
	So well, nothing so well; no, nor mean better. By th' pattern of mine own thoughts I cut out The purity of his.	
SHEPHERD:	Take hands, a bargain!	
	And, friends unknown, you shall bear witness to't: I give my daughter to him, and will make Her portion equal his.	50
FLORIZEL:	O, that must be	
	I' th' virtue of your daughter. One being dead, I shall have more than you can dream of yet; Enough then for your wonder. But come on, Contract us fore these witnesses.	55
SHEPHERD:	Come, your hand;	
	And, daughter, yours.	
POLIXENES:	Soft, swain, awhile, beseech you;	60
	Have you a father?	
FLORIZEL:	I have, but what of him?	
POLIXENES:	Knows he of this?	
FLORIZEL:	He neither does nor shall.	
POLIXENES:	Methinks a father	65
	Is at the nuptial of his son a guest That best becomes the table. Pray you, once more, Is not your father grown incapable Of reasonable affairs? Is he not stupid With age and alt'ring rheums? Can he speak, hear, Know man from man, dispute his own estate? Lies he not bed-rid, and again does nothing But what he did being childish?	70
FLORIZEL:	No, good sir;	
	He has his health, and ampler strength indeed Than most have of his age.	75

Act 4, Scene 4

- WORCESTER: But yet I would your father had been here.
 The quality and hair of our attempt
 Brooks no division. It will be thought
 By some, that know not why he is away, 40
 That wisdom, loyalty, and mere dislike
 Of our proceedings, kept the earl from hence;
 And think how such an apprehension
 May turn the tide of fearful faction
 And breed a kind of question in our cause; 45
 For well you know we of the off'ring side
 Must keep aloof from strict arbitrement,
 And stop all sight-holes, every loop from whence
 The eye of reason may pry in upon us.
 This absence of your father's draws a curtain 50
 That shows the ignorant a kind of fear
 Before not dreamt of.
- HOTSPUR: You strain too far.
 I rather of his absence make this use:
 It lends a lustre and more great opinion, 55
 A larger dare to our great enterprise,
 Than if the earl were here; for men must think,
 If we, without his help, can make a head
 To push against a kingdom, with his help
 We shall o'erturn it topsy-turvy down. 60
 Yet all goes well, yet all our joints are whole.
- DOUGLAS: As heart can think; there is not such a word
 Spoke of in Scotland as this term of fear.

Act 4, Scene 1

TOM STOPPARD: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*

- 4 **Either** (a) We know from the very beginning that Ros and Guil are doomed. In what ways does this affect our response to the play?
- Or** (b) With close reference to the passage below, discuss ways in which Stoppard dramatises Ros and Guil's increasing sense of events spinning out of control.

GUIL: Ah. That's an opening if ever there was one.
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Claudius enters behind them. At his first words they leap up and do a double-take.
Act 2

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

- 5 **Either** (a) Discuss Williams's presentation of ideas about romantic love in *A Streetcar Named Desire*.
- Or** (b) With close reference to the passage, discuss the significance of this episode to the play's developing action.

BLANCHE: May I – speak – *plainly*?
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the music of the 'blue piano' and trumpet and drums is heard.] Scene 4

OSCAR WILDE: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

- 6 **Either** (a) Discuss Wilde's presentation of ideas about social respectability in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.
- Or** (b) With close reference to the extract below, discuss Wilde's presentation of Chasuble and Miss Prism here.

[Enter JACK slowly from the back of the garden. He is dressed in the deepest mourning, with crêpe hatband and black gloves.]

MISS PRISM: Mr Worthing!

CHASUBLE: Mr Worthing?

MISS PRISM: This is indeed a surprise. We did not look for you till Monday afternoon. 5

JACK [shakes MISS PRISM's hand in a tragic manner]: I have returned sooner than I expected. Dr Chasuble, I hope you are well?

CHASUBLE: Dear Mr Worthing, I trust this garb of woe does not betoken some terrible calamity? 10

JACK: My brother.

MISS PRISM: More shameful debts and extravagance?

CHASUBLE: Still leading his life of pleasure?

JACK [shaking his head]: Dead!

CHASUBLE: Your brother Ernest dead? 15

JACK: Quite dead.

MISS PRISM: What a lesson for him! I trust he will profit by it.

CHASUBLE: Mr Worthing, I offer you my sincere condolence. You have at least the consolation of knowing that you are always the most generous and forgiving of brothers. 20

JACK: Poor Ernest! He had many faults, but it is a sad, sad blow.

CHASUBLE: Very sad indeed. Were you with him at the end?

JACK: No. He died abroad; in Paris, in fact. I had a telegram last night from the manager of the Grand Hotel.

CHASUBLE: Was the cause of death mentioned? 25

JACK: A severe chill, it seems.

MISS PRISM: As a man sows, so shall he reap.

CHASUBLE [raising his hand]: Charity, dear Miss Prism, charity! None of us are perfect. I myself am peculiarly susceptible to draughts. Will the interment take place here? 30

JACK: No. He seems to have expressed a desire to be buried in Paris.

CHASUBLE: In Paris! [Shakes his head.] I fear that hardly points to any very serious state of mind at the last. You would no doubt wish me to make some slight allusion to this tragic domestic affliction next Sunday. [JACK presses his hand convulsively.] My sermon on the meaning of the manna in the wilderness can be adapted to almost any occasion, joyful, or, as in the present case, distressing. [All sigh.] I have preached it at harvest celebrations, christenings, confirmations, on days of humiliation and festal days. The last time I delivered it was in the Cathedral, as a charity sermon on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Discontent among the Upper Orders. The Bishop, who was present, was much struck by some of the analogies I drew. 40

- JACK: Ah! that reminds me, you mentioned christenings I think, Dr Chasuble? I suppose you know how to christen all right? [DR CHASUBLE *looks astounded.*] I mean, of course, you are continually christening, aren't you? 45
- MISS PRISM: It is, I regret to say, one of the Rector's most constant duties in this parish. I have often spoken to the poorer classes on the subject. But they don't seem to know what thrift is.
- CHASUBLE: But is there any particular infant in whom you are interested, Mr Worthing? Your brother was, I believe, unmarried, was he not? 50
- JACK: Oh yes.
- MISS PRISM [*bitterly*]: People who live entirely for pleasure usually are.
- JACK: But it is not for any child, dear Doctor. I am very fond of children. No! the fact is, I would like to be christened myself, this afternoon, if you have nothing better to do. 55
- CHASUBLE: But surely, Mr Worthing, you have been christened already?
- JACK: I don't remember anything about it.
- CHASUBLE: But have you any grave doubts on the subject?
- JACK: I certainly intend to have. Of course I don't know if the thing would bother you in any way, or if you think I am a little too old now. 60
- CHASUBLE: Not at all. The sprinkling, and, indeed, the immersion of adults is a perfectly canonical practice.
- JACK: Immersion!
- CHASUBLE: You need have no apprehensions. Sprinkling is all that is necessary, or indeed I think advisable. Our weather is so changeable. At what hour would you wish the ceremony performed? 65
- JACK: Oh, I might trot round about five if that would suit you.
- CHASUBLE: Perfectly, perfectly! In fact I have two similar ceremonies to perform at that time. A case of twins that occurred recently in one of the outlying cottages on your own estate. Poor Jenkins the carter, a most hard-working man. 70
- JACK: Oh! I don't see much fun in being christened along with other babies. It would be childish. Would half-past five do?
- CHASUBLE: Admirably! Admirably! [*Takes out watch.*] And now, dear Mr Worthing, I will not intrude any longer into a house of sorrow. I would merely beg you not to be too much bowed down by grief. What seem to us bitter trials are often blessings in disguise. 75
- MISS PRISM: This seems to me a blessing of an extremely obvious kind.

Act 2

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