

AQA GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 2: Writers' viewpoints and perspectives

SET D

Insert

The two sources that follow are:

Source A: 21th Century literary non-fiction

Billy Connolly: Tall Tales and Wee Stories

An extract from Billy Connolly's autobiography published in 2019

Source B: 19th Century non-fiction

Memoirs of Joseph Grimaldi

An extract from Joseph Grimaldi's autobiography, edited by Charles Dickens

Published in 1838

Source A

Billy Connolly is a Scottish comedian and storyteller. Source A is taken from the beginning of his autobiography *Billy Connolly: Tall Tales and Wee Stories*, published in 2019.

I've always loved telling stories. It's the most natural thing in the world for me. When I was a musician and folk singer, I would chat to the audience between songs. I wouldn't tell jokes, as such, I told wee¹ stories.

5 Once, in the early days, when I'd forgotten the lyrics to an old Jimmy Driftwood song, I stopped singing and started riffing² on the story of the song to cover myself. The audience loved it. They laughed and cheered when I'd finished and I thought to myself, oh, this is interesting!

10 So, I was a storyteller long before I was a comedian. It was something I learned at school and later in the army, but most of all from my time as a welder in the shipyards on the Clyde. When we stopped work for a cup of tea, and the heavy machinery fell silent, the stories always flowed.

15 They could be rough, rude, cruel even, but they were always funny. And there were some brilliantly funny men there, much funnier than me, real patter³ merchants who could've made a life out of comedy. But I guess I had a banjo⁴ and that gave me a ticket out.

Being a comedian has always been a bit of a mystery to me, because I actually very rarely get funny ideas away from the stage. I can't churn out jokes like some people can. I wouldn't know how. But I can always tell stories. And the comedy seems to emerge out of the stories as I tell them.

20 As you're about to see, my stories usually don't come in a conventional shape. They're kind of lumpy and strange. They might appear to have a beginning, middle and end, but often they don't - it's an illusion. They're a merry-go-round of memories, observations, fantasies and ad-libs that somehow fit together and mean something. That's the way I like it because that way they're as imperfect as I am. They're not story-
25 shaped; they're me-shaped.

30 The thought of going out on stage scares the life out of me. It always has. I'm riddled with anxiety and self-doubt every time. What am I going to say to these people? But the nerves are good for me, they force me to work harder. And if I didn't - if I got complacent - then it could fall flat and I'd make a fool of myself. But when it's good, there's no better feeling. I love it when I pick up on a ripple of laughter. I try to build on that, to try something new. And I love the sense of trust that comes with that: an audience who are willing to stick with me wherever my story goes.

¹ Small

² Improvising

³ Chat

⁴ A small string instrument, like a guitar

35 I don't really 'prepare' as such. There's no special technique and I've never done homework. I never write anything down. All I have when I step out on stage is a wee list of headings like this:

Parachutists
Army
Holiday
Cameras
40 Shampoo

And every time I take a step back for a sip of water, I'll glance at the list on my wee table and see two or three things, and then I'll go on to talk about them. And sometimes they'll come out jumbled up in a very weird and unexpected order, and that creates something new that's as surprising to me as it is to you.

45 I will give you an example. I might have a story about parachuting. And maybe the previous night, halfway through, that led me unexpectedly into talking about, say, welding. Then the next night I might start by talking about welding, and see where that leads me. Then, on a whim, I might stick something new in the middle of that, and see how that affects the next thing. That is the way I operate. I get lost and see where it
50 leads me.

I love losing my way. I love getting lost in cities and small towns and all kinds of places, wandering off down long and winding streets and wee lanes and exploring the area, turning corners and seeing what's there. And I love getting lost in my stories for the same reason. It's how I discover things, how I learn things, how I imagine things. It
55 keeps things fresh and it keeps them funny and it keeps me amused.

I must admit that I didn't always feel this way. There was a point in the past when I thought that maybe I was mentally ill, and so I went and asked some Buddhists - in Lockerbie, of all places - about all this stuff going round and round in my head in such a rapid and chaotic way. And they just said, 'Enjoy it. Sit back and enjoy it. Watch it
60 like a train going past.' So that's what I now do. And that's what I recommend that you do, too.

Turn over for Source B

Source B

Joseph Grimaldi was the most famous clown and entertainer in England during the 1800s. Source B is an extract from his autobiography, describing a moment from his childhood where his father pretended to be dead in order to see his sons' reactions. Joseph is referred to as Joe; his younger brother is John; and Black Sam is one of the family servants.

The father was extremely hospitable, and fond of company; he rarely dined alone, and on certain gala days, of which Christmas-eve was one, had a very large party, upon which occasions his really splendid service of plate, together with various costly articles of *bijouterie*¹, were laid out for the admiration of the guests. Upon one Christmas-eve, when the dining-parlour was decorated and prepared with all due gorgeousness and splendour, the two boys, accompanied by Black Sam, stole into it, and began to pass various encomiums² on its beautiful appearance.



"Ah!" said Sam, in reply to some remark of the brothers, "and when old Massa³ die, all dese fine things vill be yours."

Both the boys were much struck with this remark, and especially John, the younger, who, being extremely young, probably thought much less about death than his father, and accordingly exclaimed, without the least reserve or delicacy, that he should be exceedingly glad if all these fine things were his.

Nothing more was said upon the subject. Black Sam went to his work, the boys commenced a game of play, and nobody thought any more of the matter except the father himself, who, passing the door of the room at the moment the remarks were made, distinctly heard them. He pondered over the matter for some days, and at length, with the view of ascertaining⁴ the dispositions of his two sons, formed a singular resolution, still connected with the topic ever upwards in his mind, and determined to feign⁵ himself dead. He caused himself to be laid out in the drawing-room, covered with a sheet, and had the room darkened, the windows closed, and all the usual ceremonies which accompany death, performed. All this being done, and the servants duly instructed, the two boys were cautiously informed that their father had died suddenly, and were at once hurried into the room where he lay, in order that he might hear them give vent to their real feelings.

When Joe was brought into the dark room on so short a notice, his sensations were rather complicated, but they speedily resolved themselves into a firm persuasion that his father was not dead. A variety of causes led him to this conclusion, among which the most prominent were, his having very recently seen his father in the best health; and, besides several half-suppressed winks and blinks from Black Sam, his observing, by looking closely at the sheet, that his deceased parent still breathed.

¹ Jewellery or trinkets.

² A speech to praise something very highly

³ The boys' father

⁴ To find out

⁵ Pretend

With very little hesitation the boy perceived what line of conduct he ought to adopt, and at once bursting into a roar of the most distracted grief, flung himself upon the floor, and rolled about in a seeming transport of anguish.

40 John, not having seen so much of public life as his brother, was not so cunning, and perceiving in his father's death nothing but a relief from flogging⁶ and books (for both of which he had a great dislike), and the immediate possession of all the plate in the dining room, skipped about the room, indulging in various snatches of song, and, snapping his fingers, declared that he was glad to hear it.

45 "O! you cruel boy," said Joe, in a passion of tears, "hadn't you any love for your dear father? Oh! what would I give to see him alive again!"

"Oh! never mind," replied the brother; "don't be such a fool as to cry; we can have the cuckoo-clock all to ourselves now."

50 This was more than the deceased could bear. He jumped from the bier⁷, opened the shutters, threw off the sheet, and attacked his younger son most unmercifully; while Joe, not knowing what might be his own fate, ran and hid himself in the coal-cellar, where he was discovered some four hours afterwards, by Black Sam, fast asleep, who carried him to his father, who had been anxiously in search of him, and by whom he was received with every demonstration of affection, as the son who truly and sincerely loved him.



⁶ Violent beating

⁷ A wooden frame or stand that holds a corpse or coffin

End of sources