

Comparative Study

Texts

- **Eclipsed** – Patricia Burke Brogan
- **Never Let Me Go** – Kazuo Ishiguro
- **Brooklyn** – **Director:** John Crowley (Film based on novel by Colm Tóibín)

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A. Theme: Growing Up

The theme of a text is a big idea or underlying message that is shown to us through the **plot, characters, setting and dramatic moments**. The theme which links all three comparative texts is the idea of **growing up**. The characters in the novel, play and film all have to overcome challenges in order to grow as people. Interestingly, characters

of different ages can face similar challenges. For example, the theme of growing up is explored through bullying at school, bullying in a Magdalene Laundry and bullying at work. There are many other aspects of the texts which highlight this common theme of growing up and they are analysed in this section.

Never Let Me Go

Growing up is a theme that lies at the heart of the novel *Never Let Me Go*. Kathy H., the 31-year-old narrator, tells the story of her years spent growing up in Hailsham, a school for young clones. Kathy and her friends, Ruth and Tommy, have been brought up to donate their organs to sick people. They encounter many challenges as they move from the safe world of their school to the much more difficult world of carers and donors. The characters grow in two main ways: firstly, from students to adults, and secondly, as immature young people to more rounded and sensible adults. As such, growing up emerges as a powerful theme in the novel.

Bullying helps to explore the theme of growing up in the novel, particularly in the case of Tommy. He is teased for being weak at art. He is ignored when the boys are selecting football teams because, even though he is a very good player, they know he has a temper and they want to laugh at him when he gets upset. During one such incident, Kathy approaches Tommy and tries to calm him down. He is swinging his arms hysterically, however, and Kathy remembers ‘as he threw up his arm, he knocked my hand aside and hit the side of my face’. Tommy is too angry to realise what he has done until a few days later. He approaches Kathy and apologises: ‘I’m really, really sorry. I honestly didn’t mean to hit you the other day. I wouldn’t dream of hitting a girl, and even if I did, I wouldn’t dream of hitting you’. Kathy forgives Tommy and tells him she knows it was an accident and not to

worry about it. The way Kathy and Tommy deal with this incident shows that they are growing up to be rounded, mature people. Kathy shows great compassion for Tommy when he is being bullied, even though he is not a popular student. Tommy, meanwhile, is humble enough to admit that he made a mistake.

The theme of growing up can be further seen in how the students learn about money at Hailsham. As part of their development the students take part in ‘exchanges’. These are events that take place four times a year at the school and allow students to sell their artworks. However, students do not use real money. Students sell their artworks for tokens. They use these tokens to buy things at the ‘sales’, when boxes of bits and pieces are brought in from outside the school. Using tokens instead of real money means that the students are prevented from truly growing up. They are learning about the value of things, but they are not learning about how to be independent in later life. This is because their lives will be controlled from start to finish. The use of tokens rather than money is a major hint for the students that they are not like other people. They must continue their lives as clones, regardless of whether they have money or not. They do not exist to have the freedom to buy and sell things, to travel the world, or to start a company. They exist to help other people survive. **This is a crucial lesson for their growth.**

Imagination and fantasy are central to the

theme of growing up, and we can see definite evidence of this in the novel. Ruth starts a 'secret guard' gang to protect Miss Geraldine from a plot to kidnap her. However, the plot is just a silly rumour that goes around a big school and has no real substance to it. Nevertheless, this does not stop Ruth and Kathy from spying on people, and even punishing them. Kathy recalls how another student, Marge K., once did 'something really embarrassing to us' during the day. She remembers that 'we chose to punish her by hauling her out of bed, holding her face against the window pane and ordering her to look up at the woods'. Learning when to let go of these fantasies is important for growing up. Kathy has a big row with Moira, who thinks that the secret plot is a load of 'rubbish' and 'just another of Ruth's made-up things'. Kathy furiously defends Ruth and their gang, even going as far as to lie to Moira about the evidence the gang has uncovered. Years later, Kathy accepts that 'Moira was suggesting she and I cross some line together, and I wasn't prepared for that yet'. **Looking back, Kathy is aware that playing with fantasies and then letting go of them was a crucial part of growing up.**

An essential element of the theme of growing up is learning how to deal with uncomfortable truths. The students at Hailsham must face the reality that they were not born like other human beings, but have been cloned. Kathy remembers a time when 30 students were gathered around the pavilion waiting for the rain to stop so they could play a game of rounders. Miss Lucy says the students have been 'told and not told' about their futures, and that it is time to clear up the questions. 'It's time someone spelt it out,' she tells them. Miss Lucy reveals to Kathy and her peers that 'your lives are set out for you. You'll become adults, then before you're old, you'll start to donate your vital organs'. She emphasises that none of the students 'will be film stars' or 'will be working in a supermarket'. Some of the students shrug off Miss Lucy's revelation. Others think that maybe she has lost

her mind. Kathy explains that 'what Miss Lucy said to us that afternoon led to a real shift in our attitudes. It was after that day that jokes about donations faded away, and we started to think properly about things'. This key moment forces the students to confront the truth about their lives. **It helps to develop the theme of growing up in the novel.**

We can further explore the theme of growing up by looking at how the characters develop intimate, loving relationships. Ruth and Tommy are 'respected as a couple' because they are not show-offs. Kathy notices that, unlike other couples at Hailsham, 'if they cuddled or whatever, it felt like they were genuinely doing it for each other, not for an audience'. Ruth and Tommy enjoy being together. They never appear to be in love, but they value one another, and they have a positive outlook on relationships. Meanwhile, Kathy is in a less certain position. She admits that the students 'were pretty confused about the whole idea of sex'. She wants to follow Miss Emily's advice: 'If you can't find someone with whom you truly wish to share this experience, then don't!' However, Kathy feels peer pressure to sleep with someone. Eventually, she decides she wants to be with a boy called Harry C. However, things are not that simple. Ruth and Tommy break up. Rumours circulate among the students that Kathy and Tommy will become a couple instead. Things get more complicated when Ruth asks Kathy if she will help her get back together with Tommy. Kathy agrees to help Ruth and drops her interest in Tommy. **Kathy, like Ruth and Tommy, is still growing up. She is not sure what she wants. Meanwhile, her two friends develop a typical on-off relationship. These relationships are an important part of growing up for all of the characters. They also help to illustrate the theme.**

The theme of growing up is developed further when Kathy decides to leave the Cottages and begin her career as a carer. Kathy has become tired of life at the Cottages. She

has outgrown Ruth and her nasty opinions. She decides to leave when Ruth tells her that Tommy would never be with her because he 'doesn't like girls who've been with ... this person and that'. Kathy explains that she 'never wavered' after hearing Ruth's insulting description of her. Her decision causes her to start 'looking at everything ... in a different light'. She understands that she is now 'one of the ones leaving'. Kathy admits that working as a carer is a big challenge, especially when it comes to dealing with solitude, or the possibility that someone she is caring for might die 'out of the blue'. Kathy is not fully mature yet; she says that donors 'complete' rather than 'die' because she does not want to think about her own death. Working as a carer helps Kathy to learn new things about herself. She says that she likes 'the feeling of getting into my little car, knowing for the next couple of hours I'll have only the roads, the big grey sky and my daydreams for company'. **Kathy's decision to move on from the Cottages and start work emphasises the theme of growing up in the novel, in a thoughtful and relatable way.**

The novel expands on the theme of growing up when Kathy and Tommy confront Miss Emily and Madame about 'deferrals'. Rumours that Hailsham students can postpone their donations in a process known as 'deferrals' appear throughout the novel. It is believed that students who really love each other qualify for a deferral. The idea is that people who love each other should not have to take part in donations. Kathy becomes Ruth's carer and the two go on a trip to see a boat. However, the trip is really an excuse for Ruth to see Tommy, who is recovering from a donation in a care centre near where the boat is located. Ruth wants to tell Kathy and Tommy that she thinks they should be together and that they should seek a deferral on their donations because they are a couple who truly love each other. 'I kept you apart,' she says, asking for forgiveness. She gives Kathy and Tommy an address for Madame. Kathy and Tommy go to Madame's

house and tell her their theory that people in love can get deferrals. Madame is very sceptical: 'You say you're sure? Sure that you're in love? How can you know it? You think love is so simple'. Tommy explains that the proof of their love can be found in their artwork. Madame is joined by Miss Emily who explains: 'It was never true ... a wishful rumour. That's all it ever was'. Kathy and Tommy persist in their questioning, however. 'Why did you take all our art stuff away?' asks Tommy. 'Why train us, encourage us, make us produce all of that?' asks Kathy. They want more answers from Miss Emily and Madame. They are not prepared to accept simple explanations, like a child might. Instead, they show that they have grown into adults by seeking detailed, plausible responses to their queries. Miss Emily explains that their theories 'weren't far wrong about that. We took away your art because we thought it would reveal your souls. Or to put it more finely, we did it to prove you had souls at all'. **This scene emphasises the theme of growing up because Kathy and Tommy are treated like adults by Madame and Miss Emily. They have outgrown the rumours of their childhood. They have learned that, as clones, they are thought not to have souls. However, they have proven otherwise.**

The final way that the novel raises the theme of growing up is when the characters let go of a person or a place that they have loved. In the last chapter, Kathy is working as Tommy's carer. However, Tommy has started to put distance between them because he knows his fourth (and final) donation is due to occur, and this will lead to his death. Tommy tells Kathy that 'he doesn't want her to take this the wrong way' but, 'he ought to get a different carer'. Tommy does not want Kathy to watch him die. He is worried that she will see him suffering. 'I don't want to be that way in front of you,' he says. Tommy tries to push Kathy away by telling her that she does not really understand him because she has never been a donor. This 'really stung' Kathy. Soon

afterwards Tommy explains to her: 'you'd be the perfect one for me if you weren't you'. He sits beside her and talks about a vision he has of two people in a river, holding onto each other despite the strong current buffering them about. 'That's how I think it is with us. It's a shame, Kath, because we've loved each other all our lives. But in the end, we can't stay together forever.' Kathy accepts Tommy's wishes and promises to find him a good carer to see him through his fourth

donation. **By this point, of course, Kathy is a woman who has been through a lot. However, this key moment is crucial in her development as a person. She learns that she has to let go of the person she loves. This is something that the young Kathy at Hailsham, or the more mature Kathy at the Cottages, did not have to think about. It also marks the beginning of the end of her life, as she becomes a donor after finishing her work with Tommy.**

KEY POINTS



- Growing up is a theme that lies at the heart of the novel *Never Let Me Go*.
- Kathy H., the 31-year-old narrator, tells the story of her years spent growing up in Hailsham, a school for young clones.
- Bullying helps to explore the theme of growing up in the novel, particularly in the case of Tommy.
- Kathy shows maturity and compassion when she supports Tommy during the time when he is bullied.
- The theme of growing up can be further seen in how the students learn about money at Hailsham.
- They take part in 'exchanges', which are events that take place four times a year at the school, and allow students to sell their artworks.
- Students sell their artworks for tokens.
- They use these tokens to buy things at the 'sales', when boxes of bits and pieces are brought in from outside the school.
- Using tokens instead of real money means that the students are prevented from truly growing up.
- Imagination and fantasy are central to the theme of growing up, and we can see definite evidence of this in the novel.
- Ruth starts a 'secret guard' gang to protect Miss Geraldine from a plot to kidnap her.
- Even though the plot is only a rumour, Kathy defends Ruth and the gang's right to investigate people.
- Looking back, Kathy is aware that playing with fantasies and then letting go of them was a crucial part of growing up.
- The students at Hailsham must face the reality that they were not born like other human beings, but have instead been cloned.
- Miss Lucy says the students have been 'told and not told' about their futures, and that it is time to clear up the questions.
- Kathy explains that 'what Miss Lucy said to us that afternoon led to a real shift in our attitudes. It was after that day that jokes about donations faded away, and we started to think properly about things'.

- The theme of growing up is shown by looking at how the characters develop intimate, loving relationships.
- Ruth and Tommy are 'respected as a couple' because they are not show-offs, even though their relationship is a typical on-off relationship.
- Kathy is not sure what kind of relationship she wants and becomes confused because, at different times, she feels peer pressure to be with both Harry C. and Tommy.
- The clones want to learn about their 'possibles' and try to find them so they can learn about where they come from.
- Ruth goes with her friends to Norfolk to check out her possible.
- However, she is left disappointed and must accept the reality that she has not been cloned from a respectable woman, but from someone with a much tougher background.
- Kathy's decision to move on from the Cottages and start work emphasises the theme of growing up in a thoughtful and relatable way.
- The novel expands on the theme of growing up when Kathy and Tommy confront Miss Emily and Madame about 'deferrals'.
- Kathy grows up in a more serious way when she accepts Tommy's decision about being cared for by someone else.
- Kathy lets go of Tommy and begins the end of her life by confirming her plans to start her work as a donor.

Eclipsed and Never Let Me Go

Growing up is a key theme in the play *Eclipsed*. It is a story about young women who have been put into a Magdalene Laundry because they have had children outside of marriage. Brigit, Nellie-Nora, Mandy and Cathy do unpaid work at a Magdalene Laundry. They are expected to clean, sew and mend bedsheets and other clothes for priests and bishops. Life in the laundry is tedious and unfulfilling for the women. It is nearly impossible for them to grow as individuals. They do not get to see their own children grow up either. However, throughout the play the women fight for the chance to develop and grow. They long to see their children, have happy relationships and travel the world. Their story is about the struggle to grow. In their happiest moments they achieve great things against terrible odds. However, their happy moments are rare. They are largely hampered and prevented from growing by the terrible conditions of the

laundry.

As in the novel *Never Let Me Go*, bullying is a major feature of *Eclipsed* and it plays an important role in preventing the women from growing and developing as people. Unlike the novel, where the bullying is between teenagers, the bullying in the play is carried out by Mother Victoria who looks down on the women in the laundry. The bullying is all the worse because the women are so vulnerable. Mother Victoria is supposed to take care of them, but instead she shows them no compassion and offers them little hope of a better life. She barks orders at the women if she sees them take even a moment's break: 'Back to work immediately ... you've wasted the morning! Hurry!' she says. She is also violent towards them. Cathy explains that after she was caught escaping from the laundry she was brought back and 'Mother Victoria gave me a cup of tea and the usual sermon'. The stage

directions note that she *'rubs her head'* while speaking. This indicates that Mother Victoria has hit her. However, Cathy remains determined to leave the laundry, promising 'I'll keep trying! I'm getting out!' **This shows Cathy's desire to grow and develop and have a better life. Like Tommy in the novel, she wants to overcome the bullies.**

Like the students in the novel, the women in the play get very little chance to learn about money. They must do tedious, tiring work, and they don't get paid for it. Indeed, they are expected to be grateful for the way they are treated: 'Nobody wants these women,' says Mother Victoria. 'We give them food, shelter and clothing! We look after their spiritual needs!' In a way, money would have been useless for the women. There is nothing to buy there and they don't have any independence at all. This reminds us of the students at Hailsham, who learn about what things are worth, but learn nothing at all about money. Both the women and the students have no need to learn about money because their lives will be controlled by others. **This shows that they are growing up to be dependent on others and to live without any real independence.**

The theme of growing up can be seen in the playful fantasies of the women in the laundry. They imagine they are all in Paris together and that the American pop singer Elvis Presley visits them. Brigit imagines that Elvis 'sees our Mandy in her long lacy dress and falls madly in love with her!' Later they stage a mock wedding for Mandy and Elvis. They dress a mannequin up as Elvis using bits of old clothes they find around the laundry. Mandy sings an Elvis song and kisses the mannequin in excitement, while the other women laugh and dance around the laundry. Brigit pretends to be a priest and marries Mandy and Elvis, before Nellie-Nora tells them to 'have as many babies as you want' and sends them on honeymoon. These are scenes of pure fantasy and they allow the women a little relief from the tedium of

life in the laundry. **In contrast to the 'secret guard' fantasies of *Never Let Me Go*, the Elvis fantasies help the women to grow together as people, rather than punish people who do not go along with them.**

The theme of growing up can be seen as Sister Virginia struggles with the reality of her new role as a nun in a Magdalene Laundry. Sister Virginia tells Mother Victoria that she finds the work 'difficult' and 'very sad'. She wonders about the women and if it is 'really necessary to keep them locked away?' She points out the hypocrisy of locking up women for having children outside of marriage, while allowing the fathers to live free lives. 'The men, who made them pregnant, broke the same Commandments,' she says. **Sister Virginia asks difficult questions and points out contradictions. This is different to the students at Hailsham who quietly accept their fates.** Unlike Miss Lucy in the novel, Mother Victoria offers a very inaccurate explanation as to why the women should stay in the laundry. She is shocked at Sister Virginia. 'You don't understand,' she says to her. She tells Sister Virginia that the women are in the laundry for their own good: 'This weakness to sins of the flesh stays in the blood for generations'. She explains to the young nun that she should remain humble if she wants to be a nun, telling her, 'Do not question the system ... we are eclipsed. But blind obedience will carry you through'. **Like the students at Hailsham, Sister Virginia's development as a young person is affected by harsh and upsetting truths. Unlike the students, however, she is able to leave the laundry if she chooses; the students have no choice in whether they are clones or not.**

Growing up emerges as a key theme in the play when we consider the women's experiences of relationships with men. These experiences have been very negative. Juliet, an orphan, is terrified of being near men and tells Sister Virginia that she wants to stay in the

Magdalene Laundry forever. 'I don't want to live out there ... I'd hate to live out there. All those men!' she says. Juliet tells the story of being abused by a man. She explains how Mick the vegetable man 'grabbed me here' and pushed her against a wall. He told her he'd 'break her neck' if she moved. Nellie-Nora has also had a terrible experience with a man. Her old boss Mr Persse sexually assaulted her. He made her wear lipstick because he wanted her to be 'like a city girl'. She explains how she tried to fight him off but he hurt her. **Unlike the novel, the women in the play have wholly negative experiences of relationships with men. This forces them to grow up quickly. These women contrast very sharply with Kathy, Ruth and Tommy in *Never Let Me Go*.** The students at Hailsham have quite normal relationships with one another. They fall in and out of love, and wonder what it would be like to sleep with someone. Sadly, the women in the laundry have had difficult and quite upsetting relationships. They grow up to expect nothing good from being in a relationship.

Understanding where you come from is a key part of growing up and we see this in the prologue (opening) and epilogue (closing) of the play. These are the only two scenes in the play set in 1992. All of the other scenes are set in 1963. In both scenes set in 1992, Rosa tries to find information about her mother, Brigit, who was one of the women kept at Saint Paul's Magdalene Laundry. Rosa explains how she 'had to come' to Ireland from America when her adoption papers came through and she found out her mother's name and address. She finds a picture of 'a baby photograph in a chocolate box'. She reads the inscription on the back 'Brigit Murphy – a girl, Rosa? – My mother! Penitent?' She is shocked to confirm that her mother was one of the women in the laundry. The women were often known by degrading names like 'penitent' or 'fallen women' to indicate that they had committed some terrible wrong and needed to be reminded of it. In the final scene

Rosa finds out that her mother was put into the laundry by her family. 'Her brother signed her in before he got married,' says Nellie-Nora, who has still not left the laundry in 1992. Rosa looks for information about her father, too. She does not know if he is still alive. She offers to meet Nellie-Nora but Nellie-Nora refuses to travel in a car: 'No, no Rosa! I don't go out much,' she says, in a panic. From this reaction Rosa gets an insight into the world her mother grew up in; the Magdalene Laundry made the women afraid. **In the play, as in the novel, key characters are desperate to find out where they come from. A crucial part of growing up, for Rosa in the play and for Ruth in the novel, is learning about their backgrounds.**

In contrast to the novel, in the play work is not used to help people to grow up and learn about themselves. Instead, work is a form of severe punishment. Work was used to prevent the women from growing up. It was used to keep them busy. The women in the play highlight this in a very clear way. They washed and mended sheets and other linen from churches, and other state services, such as the army. Women in the Magdalene Laundries did not get paid for their work. In fact, these women did so much unpaid work that private laundry companies complained that they were losing business because they could not compete with an organisation that did not pay its workers. The hardships endured by the women in the Magdalene Laundries are highlighted by the play. Cathy complains that the women need 'a machine for polishing instead of these old wooden blocks'. Brigit explains to her that 'we're the machines'. It is a very revealing line, as it tells us how the women felt dehumanised, overworked and bored. Brigit is highly critical of the conditions in the laundry: 'Work! Work! Work! Work is God here! Washing, scrubbing, washing, scrubbing, labouring!' The women feel like the work they are doing leaves them in purgatory. 'Purgatory is a place or state of punishment where some souls

suffer for a time before they enter Heaven,' says Nellie-Nora. **As such, work has a very different effect on growing up in the play and on growing up in the novel. Kathy enjoys her work, even though it is difficult. Like the women in the play, she has no real choice about her work. However, she does have some freedom to move around. The women in the play, in contrast, are stuck in a kind of 'purgatory'. It does not help them to grow up. In fact, it could be said that their work turns them into less independent and less secure adults.**

As in the novel, the women in the laundry highlight the theme of growing up by standing up for themselves in a key moment. The women are putting on lipstick for a bit of fun. Nellie-Nora, however, refuses to wear the lipstick, as it reminds her of her abusive boss Mr Persse. She becomes upset at the memory of the harm he did to her and starts to cry. Sister Virginia enters and accuses Brigit of making Nellie-Nora feel bad, 'Now what have you done, Brigit?' Sister Virginia tries to comfort Nellie-Nora with some chocolates, but is rebuffed. 'Get away from me,' says Nellie-Nora. The women, led by Brigit, turn on Sister Virginia. 'Keep your bloody chocolates. The keys, Pasty Face! Give me the keys!' says Brigit. Sister Virginia refuses to hand over the keys and Brigit goes into a rage: 'You think if you keep us locked up, that we'll forget about living!' She approaches Sister Virginia and threatens to force her to wear some lipstick. 'You don't know anything! Never had a lover! Never had a baby!' Brigit 'scribbles "scab" on the wall with lipstick' and then 'throws Sister Virginia to the floor'. Brigit and Cathy then plan an escape from the laundry, but are interrupted by Mother Victoria.

The theme of growing up is demonstrated in this scene as the women show that they are

tired of being treated like second-class citizens. In particular, Brigit asserts herself as a woman who is capable of standing up to authority. **However, a key difference between the play and the novel is that Kathy and Tommy show they have grown up by respectfully and politely seeking answers to their questions. In contrast, Brigit shows she is an independent woman by demanding the keys that would set her free. In both texts, the characters are showing that they are grown up enough to deal with the adult world, but they approach their challenges in different ways.**

The theme of growing up is illustrated by how the characters let go of a person or place that they love in the play. Following the confrontation between Brigit and Sister Virginia, there is a moment when the women are not really being watched. Sensing an opportunity, Cathy hides in a laundry basket and the other women 'fasten metal locks and push it hurriedly through' the exit door. The remaining women worry about Cathy and are also inspired by her. Nellie-Nora 'couldn't sleep ... wonderin' about Cathy' while Mandy says her 'only chance is to do what Cathy did'. Mother Victoria arrives with bad news. She tells the women that 'we must pray now. We must pray for Cathy'. Sister Virginia explains that 'they found her in the basket'. Mother Victoria and Sister Virginia lead the women in prayers for the suffocated Cathy. Brigit grows as a person by quickly letting go of Cathy. Rather than mourning her with prayers and staying in the laundry, she gets the keys from Sister Virginia and leaves the laundry forever. **Brigit, like Kathy in the novel, quickly lets go of a person she loves. She reacts to death by taking action that will change her life. This is similar to Kathy accepting her new role as a donor. Both characters grow and develop by dealing with tragedy.**

**KEY POINTS**

- Growing up is a key theme in the play *Eclipsed*.
- It is a story about young women who have been put into a Magdalene Laundry because they have had children outside of marriage.
- As in the novel, bullying is a major part of growing up for the women in the laundry.
- They are picked on by Mother Victoria and must learn to overcome her taunts.
- Like the students in the novel, the women in the laundry get very little chance to learn about money.
- Despite not getting paid for their work, they are expected to be grateful to the nuns for the treatment they get.
- The women in the laundry get relief from their tedium of constant work by fantasising about Elvis Presley.
- In contrast to the 'secret guard' fantasies of the novel, the Elvis fantasies help the women to grow together as people, rather than punish people who do not go along with them.
- Sister Virginia struggles to accept the duties which come with being a nun in a Magdalene Laundry.
- Mother Victoria justifies the terrible treatment of the women on the basis that they are sinners.
- The women's experiences of relationships with men have been very negative.
- Juliet, an orphan, is terrified of being near men and tells Sister Virginia that she wants to stay in the Magdalene Laundry forever. 'I don't want to live out there ... I'd hate to live out there. All those men!' she says.
- This contrasts with the students in the play who are curious about relationships.
- The prologue (opening) and epilogue (closing) of the play show how important heritage is when growing up.
- These are the only two scenes in the play set in 1992. All of the other scenes are set in 1963.
- In both scenes set in 1992, Rosa tries to find out information about her mother, Brigit, who was one of the women kept at Saint Paul's Magdalene Laundry.
- Rosa is desperate to know more about who she is, and where she comes from.
- This reminds us of Ruth's search for her 'possible' in the novel.
- Work is a form of severe punishment for the women and was used to prevent them from growing up.
- Brigit is highly critical of the conditions in the laundry: 'Work! Work! Work! Work is God here! Washing, scrubbing, washing, scrubbing, labouring!'
- Work has a very different effect on growing up in the play and on growing up in the novel. Kathy enjoys her work, even though it is difficult, while Brigit and the others are made to suffer through work.
- The women in the laundry highlight the theme of growing up by standing up for themselves.