

Social inequality/diversity (Class)

The idea of rich and poor is shown in numerous ways in the play. Juxtaposition is one common method of showing the class divide.

Education –

The poor don't take education very seriously. Children get suspended and end up on the dole.

On the other hand, the rich characters take education extremely seriously and go to private schools and move on to university.

Language –

The poor use bad language from a young age and teach others to swear.

On the other hand, the rich characters don't swear initially, but learn bad language. They also use a dictionary to look up the meaning of words.

Housing –

The poor don't have a house that is big enough. They live in a council house. When they move, they are re-housed by the council. The next generation can't afford their own house.

On the other hand, the rich characters live in very big houses that show their status. Prepositions are used to show the inequality of housing.

Childhood –

Childhood shows the innocence and naivety we have in life. Innocent time of life = play games, nothing is serious.

As the children grow up, some become insecure and self-conscious and don't like themselves.

Class divide demonstrates that characters can be the same age but totally different on the maturity scale.

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Relationships:

Relationships are difficult in the play. The poor mum is a single mum with lots of children to look after. As the poor children get older, they show they are stuck in the poverty trap.

On the other hand, the rich family has a married couple. However, the rich child falls in love with a poor girl and that's where a lot of the problems start.

Jobs –

When the poor characters can get jobs, they are low skilled jobs with minimum wage.

On the other hand, the rich characters have high status jobs and the female characters don't work at all.

Money –

The poor don't have a lot of money and have to get things however they can. The Mum makes sure the children don't go without.

On the other hand, the rich characters have lots of extra money and use it to show power over the poor.

Crime –

The poor are definitely criminals. There is a recurring symbol of a gun throughout the play; and as the characters get older, the crimes get more serious.

On the other hand, the rich are law abiding citizens, until the classes mix together.

Nature vs. Nurture



The 'nature versus nurture' debate is about how much a person's life is determined by their inherited genetics (their 'nature') and how much is determined by the environment they grow up in ('nurture'). The boys are identical twins and so the difference in the way their lives turn out must be a result of their different upbringings and social positions. Russell uses the twins idea to persuade us that attitudes in society influence people's lives more than their individual efforts at wanting to do well.

Russell's play is deliberately objecting to a view that was popular in the UK at the time the play was written. Margaret Thatcher's right wing conservative government claimed that everyone who wanted to work hard could be successful. But Russell clearly objects to this view.

Violence

Violence (both innocent and deadly) shows up over and over again in *Blood Brothers*. Even as children, the characters play violent games, "killing" each other with pretend guns in the song "Kids' Game." They also use an air pistol to shoot at a statue. The violence becomes more real and threatening, when a murder is committed during an armed robbery. The deadly violence doesn't climax until the final scene of the play.

Throughout the play, there are signs of how present and powerful violence is, cropping up in unexpected times and places; with parents slapping children unexpectedly etc, and children getting into trouble with the police.

Superstition –

The Narrator who is the character that acts as superstition throughout this play.

It is the poor who are superstitious at the start of the play.

However, as the two classes meet, the rich become superstitious too and start believing some of the superstitions in life.