**Reading “The Blessing”** (Student response suitable for evaluating)

The main idea conveyed in the science fiction narrative “The Blessing” is the dangers of a fascist government, mainly the way political systems utilise prejudice to control a population. The story charts the thought process of Sam, a protagonist who witnesses a young girl being violently shot in front of him. His reaction, however, is one that is detested by the reader; he shows little remorse towards her death. Sam is convinced by society that without the eponymous ‘blessing’, individuals, such as the young girl, are considered evil and deserve to be executed. The text therefore suggests the tormented way systems of government corrupt individual thought.

The main binary oppositions operating in the text are apparent in the evil/virtuous and dominant/subservient relationship, underpinning the values of a fascist government. It is evident Sam considers himself righteous and superior as he was *“one of the first to receive the blessing”.* This can be readily contrasted with the young girl, representing the minority in society who *“do not have the right to live”* as they are “*cursed and evil”.* The use of the evil/virtuous binary underpins the key fascist ideology within the text, reinforcing the way the oppressive government has utilised prejudice to conform society. Further, Sam compares the Draco to “*choking weeds”* that must be *“removed”.* Sam clearly foregrounds the dominant/subservient binary structuring the text, thus pitting the values of oppression and totalitarianism, against humanism and individualism.

The narrative obviously explores power imbalances within societal groups, which are symbolised by the “blessing” and the contrast of light and dark. The blessing symbolises the prejudice within the unnamed society, supported by the phrase, “*anyone who did not have the blessing was not human…only the perfect shall remain”.* This opinion from Sam not only reinforces his values and beliefs, but also demonstrates how the symbolism of the blessing enhances the notion that prejudice is used by the government to control the population. If you have the blessing, you are considered lawful, and if not, you must be eradicated*.* It is evident, the control over the population is oppressive, demonstrated by the bloody imagery of, “*the bullet [crushing] her crimson skull”* of the young girl who didn’t have the prejudicial blessing*.* Further, there is subtle imagery in the light/dark binary structuring the text. Light is described as the “*golden light”* of the Almighty, symbolising purity and goodliness. Evil is symbolised by the “*dark ones”*. There is an obvious foreshadow to racism in this phrase, which is an ideology disfavoured by the reader. The values of individualism are set against the negative values of racism and oppression.

The representation of Sam’s values, attitudes and beliefs clearly demonstrate how systems of government corrupt individual thought. Sam is first introduced as a man watching “*impassively as the child was killed”.*Instantly, the reader is positioned to dislike Sam; he is a man who shows “*no remorse”* to the horrific action and prefers to watch it unfold. His attitude towards to the evil deed, is that *“the child did not carry the gene”*which did not follow the “*law”*. This law is the very thing that has corrupted Sam’s values. The ideology is that of a fascist, oppressive government, which has instilled in him the values of unfounded murder and has caused him to be heartless and remorseless. This is a result of his individual thought being corrupted by the belief that “*anyone who did not have the blessing was not human”* and do not have the right to live. Sam is represented as a man who is very conceited; he was the “*first to receive the blessing”.* As the text progresses, however, Sam is represented as a man with internal conflict as “*over and over again he heard the child’s cry of fear”*, questioning whether this was “*right”.* It is evident is a portion still left in his individual thought to question the morality of the actions committed. He wonders “*don’t they deserve to live as we do”* and that a part of him did not agree that those without the blessing, those with a prejudice against them, should not be eradicated. This is an ideology favoured by the audience and demonstrates Sam’s human instinct to regret injustice in society.

The text focuses on the dangers of a fascist government, and tormented way systems of government corrupt individual thought, whilst still exploring the underlining link to systemic racism. This is a prevalent issue within a human population, and the idea is filtered throughout the text presenting the cultural idea of race in the context of a human society. The clear description of the “*dark ones”* highlights this, and the eponymous blessing is a symbol of racial prejudices. The text also suggests that the value, attitude and belief towards racism can change for the better when humans, filled with *“loathing”,* start to question obvious injustices.