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# A LEVEL

*Candidate Style Answers with commentary*

H472

# ENGLISH LITERATURE

H472/01

Drama and poetry pre-1900

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# CONTENTS

## SECTION 1

QUESTION 1A	4
QUESTION 1B	6
QUESTION 2A	8
QUESTION 2B	10
QUESTION 3A	12
QUESTION 3B	14
QUESTION 4A	16
QUESTION 4B	18
QUESTION 5A	20
QUESTION 5B	22
QUESTION 6A	24
QUESTION 6B	26

## SECTION 2

QUESTION 7	28
QUESTION 8	31
QUESTION 9	34
QUESTION 10	37
QUESTION 11	40
QUESTION 12	41



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# INTRODUCTION

At the time of publication, authentic answers from the work of students were not available so OCR senior examiners have created these candidate style answers.

These exemplars should be read in conjunction with sample assessment materials and mark schemes (and Principal Examiner's Reports once they become available) on the OCR website. This content has been selected to illustrate how questions on the new texts might be answered, and to demonstrate that approaches to question setting and marking will remain consistent with past practice. The candidate style answers are intended to exemplify work which would fulfil the top band criteria, supported by examiner commentary and conclusions. These exemplars should in no way be regarded as model answers.

OCR is open to a wide variety of approaches, and answers will be considered on their merits. It should be remembered that the standard used in marking these candidate style answers has not gone through the usual rigorous procedures and checks applied to live material.



# SECTION 1

## SHAKESPEARE QUESTION 1(A) CORIOLANUS

Discuss the following passage from Act 2 Scene 2, exploring Shakespeare's use of language and its dramatic effects.

To read the passage, please go to page 2-3 of the OCR sample assessment material: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/171432-unit-h472-1-drama-and-poetry-pre-1900-sample-assessment-materials.pdf>

**The passage begins towards the end of Cominius's eulogistic evocation of the attack by Caius Martius on Corioles, and it forms part of the formal process of naming him as prime contender (of three) for the Consulship<sup>1</sup>.** Much of the episode has a formal, almost **ritualistic quality<sup>2</sup>**: this is a recognised process, with due forms and customs.

Cominius emphasises the solitary nature of his achievement- 'alone' he 'aidless **came off' –as he attacks the citadel of death, the 'mortal gate' of the city, painting it with blood. He evokes the solitary nature of his heroism ('now all's his') describing his super-human energy and showing how the noise, the 'din of war', rekindled his 'doubled spirit'**.<sup>3</sup> The alliteration of 'run reeking o'er the lines of men' underlines the sense of a grotesque tableau, and emphasis is placed on the idea of 'painting' with hot blood. Lives, not treasures, are his 'perpetual spoil', and his battle is unceasing – 'he never stood to ease his breast'.

Menenius and the First Senator perform **a didactic, choric role<sup>4</sup>**, pointing out the case Cominius makes – Caius Martius has been 'devised' honours, like robes, and now needs to do no more than to assume them.

In emphasising Caius Martius's disdain for 'our spoils' Cominius stresses that Caius is altruistic – he does the deed for itself, not for the rewards. Again, the short lines ('he is right noble/let him be call'd for') provokes Caius Martius's appearance: an appearance **which in time is to teeter close to a confrontation.**<sup>5</sup>

On his entry, Caius Martius is formally offered the consulship by the Senate, whose spokesman is Menenius: his brisk and uneffusive 'I do owe them/my life and services' is followed by a reminder that he still has one hurdle to overcome – the people's acclamation.

**Here his tone changes. In what feels like an aside, he begs Menenius ('I do beseech you, let me oerleap that custom') as if in a moment of individual heroism akin to that which he showed at Corioles, he can overturn Roman constitutional precedent .<sup>6</sup>** In Caius Martius's bald description of the act he must perform – appearing naked before the plebeians in a gown of humility – he simply asks to be excused, twice. His repetition of the plea, though still temperate, ought perhaps to alert the audience to his level of desperation.

1. Sees episode as process with its own shape

2. Tone

3. Unpicks language, commenting on presentation

4. Ritualistic, formal nature of transaction underlined

5. Sense of developing political crisis

6. Sees register variety, and links imagery



The formal tone now shifts to the Tribunes, as Sicinius reminds Caius, in what seems a formal challenge, that the custom must be done. The people will not forgo the expected ceremony which his predecessors have performed – **a warning with which Menenius concurs when in what feels like an urgent aside ‘put them not to’t’ he warns against breaking with custom.**<sup>7</sup> Caius Martius must follow precedent, which says that he must ‘take... to you... your honour with your form’ – use your physical scars as badges of your deserving.

Caius Martius describes the process as a charade: as the tension mounts, the beginning of a conflict is signalled when he says not only that he does not want to do it, representing it as deceit (‘a part/that I shall blush in acting’) but then suggests, provocatively, that the people should not have the right to demand it – the process ‘might well be taken from the people.’ **In so saying he goes on the offensive, and Brutus’s ‘mark you that’ shows that he has seen this. Caius Martius returns to his old theme – the people have not deserved this, nor did he do it for them.**<sup>8</sup>

The level of tension is revealed by Menenius’s insistent aside to Caius Martius – ‘do not stand upon it’: **Resuming his ‘master of ceremonies’ register, he attempts to restore order and to move the process forward, trying to restore the sense of accustomed order and ceremony and to re-establish the tone. But the damage has already begun: and despite a gushing pronouncement ‘to our noble Consul wish we all joy and honour’, the outcome which Cominius took for granted in his opening speech is now in jeopardy.**<sup>9</sup> The fanfare of trumpets signals the end of this stage of the process – but cracks in the structure are growing fast.

#### Examiner commentary

A clear and detailed response to the passage which is particularly sensitive to the three registers – eulogistic, highly formal, and personal – in which it operates at three levels. Consistently detailed (AO1) and blends text skilfully into discussion (AO2).

7. Sense of political forces realigning

8. Sees oncoming crisis

9. Despite attempts to restore order, identifies beginning of tragic rift



## QUESTION 1(B)

'More a victim of his own arrogance than of political plotting.'

Using your knowledge of the play as a whole, show how far you agree with this view of the character Coriolanus.

Remember to support your answer with reference to different interpretations.

There is no doubt that Coriolanus falls victim to political plotting and intrigue, both in Rome (at the hands of the tribunes, and as a result of 'damage limitation' by the patricians when he is banished) and as victim to Tullus Aufidius's flexible view of combat and treachery at the end of the play. **So in the most direct sense, Caius Martius is met throughout the play by politically and personally motivated groups who contribute to, and work towards, his downfall.**<sup>10</sup>

**Whether he is the victim of 'his own arrogance' is more questionable. Is his dominant flaw arrogance, or is it perhaps his narrow-mindedness and a failure to react adaptably to his fellow humans?**<sup>11</sup> The range of his tone of voice - from harsh cries of condemnation of the plebeians 'whose breath I hate/As reek of the rotten fens' to his almost sensual view of close physical combat which excites him as 'when tapers burned to bedward' suggests that this hero **(whom Harold Bloom has said has less 'interiority' than any other major Shakespeare heroic character - despite the play's closeness in presumed composition date to Macbeth, Hamlet and Othello, all of which present complex and introspective heroes)**<sup>12</sup> seems more to be the product of his flawed upbringing and the inculcation, by his class and family, of strange and extreme social attitudes.

**Coriolanus has been educated for combat.**<sup>13</sup> The vocabulary of his mother and the way they talk as a family shows this. The gruesome delight shared by the women over his son's 'mammocking' of a butterfly - his father's son - provokes disquiet in an audience: the almost-comic counting of cicatrices like bruises on a boxing champion, and the powerful and melodramatic descriptions of 'reeking' blood - as graphic as in Macbeth - suggest that the world in which he has been brought up is consecrated to personal physical valour.

It also seems very important to Coriolanus that valour is a solitary act: his martial skill consists in achieving impossible feats of physical courage on his own, not in gaining 'spoils', which he declines with contempt. **Shut in to do battle with the Volsci almost on his own, he emerges as an emblematically Martial figure in an almost symbolic scene, allowing Cominius to make divine analogies in his eulogy to the Roman Senators.**<sup>14</sup>

10. Looks at one aspect of question

11. But challenges other: is he arrogant?

12. Critical support from Harold Bloom

13. Evaluation of education also looks at imagery and variety of language, as clues to motivation

14. Brisk link to context reinforces point



**Arrogance is therefore perhaps an unfair accusation to make: Coriolanus is possessed more of a complete certainty (despite his inconsistencies; one may use stratagems in war but not in peace) that he is in the right, and that that which he condemns is contemptible.**<sup>15</sup> However, he is capable of exhortation, inspiration and leadership, and praises his own troops to encourage them when they seem valorous.

15. Returns to central argument

**The root of the tragedy lies in other conflicts, among them Rome's own internal divisions. And it is here that his inability to adapt, pretend or 'dissemble' is his downfall. Coriolanus is acutely sensitive to insult or dishonour: the slightest verbal provocation (even when it is a response to his own aggressive or ironic behaviour) provokes a loss of self-control.**<sup>16</sup>

This raises the question of what Coriolanus is proud to be. What does he want to be seen as? His final reaction to Aufidius's contemptuous 'boy' feels like his moment of downfall, and suggests that it is some ideal concept of honourable 'manliness' which is most important to him, and that the failure of others to see his honour and individuality is to him the worst insult of all.

16. Essay develops to look at wider context of play's action: his enemies and family

**A key vulnerability – and one for which he is even criticised for 'pride' by his mother – lies in his lack of ability to pretend (which could also be seen as a moral strength). When he cannot 'adapt' to political situations, she observes that if tactics allow stratagems in battle, then surely they should also be allowed in life. Coriolanus is a moral absolutist, but rather than being a symptom of arrogance, it seems in him to be a symptom of a limiting honesty.**<sup>17</sup> As Wilders observes, Coriolanus values consistency and steadfastness above all else – 'with every minute' he tells the people 'you do change a mind/ and call him noble that was now your hate/him vile that was your garland'.

17. Latter part of essay attempts to define hero's weakness

**This mysterious Roman hero, almost devoid of interior characterisation, when confronted by his mother and asked to offer a contradictory, self denying truce, simply points out that it will be 'most grievous to him'.**<sup>18</sup> He is surely far less a victim of arrogance than a victim of his limitations: limitations of human understanding and adaptability. We feel so little for him at the play's conclusion because we have been allowed by Shakespeare to learn so little about his motives and inner feelings: his death has an abstract, emblematic quality, despite Aufidius's stage management of the conclusion. **We feel no sorrow (as for Hamlet) or savage satisfaction (as with Macbeth). Coriolanus is a mystery, but his true weakness is more rooted in his ruthless simplicity and his honesty than in his arrogance.**<sup>19</sup>

18. ...and limitations as a hero..

19. Audience response, and a return to the central issue of play

#### Examiner commentary

This essay looks with focused attention at the shortcomings of the hero in terms of the question, identifying the central issue of his 'lack of interior life'; and the mystery of his motivation. Weighing up clues, with critical support, it offers (AO1) a very coherent argument, with a useful sense (AO5) of different interpretations.



## QUESTION 2(A) HAMLET

Discuss the following passage from Act 3 Scene 4, exploring Shakespeare's use of language and its dramatic effects.

To read the passage, please go to page 4-5 of the OCR sample assessment material: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/images/171432-unit-h472-1-drama-and-poetry-pre-1900-sample-assessment-materials.pdf>

This passage is situated at a central point in the play's 'rising action'; the Prince, having witnessed the king's reaction to 'the Mousetrap', has excitedly witnessed his uncle at prayer, but has postponed his revenge. Both the mother and son meet in an excitable, inflamed mood: this is matched by the language – accusative and imperative on his part; angry, frightened and perplexed on **hers**.<sup>20</sup>

**20.** Passage deftly located in overall action

The spoken registers vary, from short, sharp exchanges (with Hamlet leading – more like parent than child) to the intervention of the distressed Polonius. Hamlet moves from the conversational ('budge') to more formal moral imperatives. **His assertive, strongly accented opening ('come', 'sit' 'shall') turns to a more ordered speech, when he demands she will not leave until she understands.**<sup>21</sup> Her cries for help and questionings punctuate the scene, prior to the fragmented episode, as we experience the disruptive horror of Polonius's death. Hamlet's triumphant 'how now, a rat? Dead for a ducat, dead' suggests a sudden feeling that he has achieved his goal.

**21.** Detailed discussion of range and type of language registers

And yet, as the scene closes, Hamlet takes control and expresses his feelings about the murder and incestuous marriage – 'almost as bad, good mother, as kill a king, and marry with his brother'. **The almost jocular rhyme focuses attention on the play's key terms – mother, kill, king, marry, brother. The snarling plosives suggest that Hamlet suspects his mother of complicity in the murder.**<sup>22</sup> This leads into a formal speech in a more academic tone, filled with images of nature perverted, and heaven offended: an innocent forehead is blistered and lovers' vows are false.

**22.** Sense of tone and language effects



For the first time, Hamlet confronts his mother with the suspicions he has harboured since his father's death and his mother's re-marriage. In his uncontrollable anger, he transgresses the commandment to 'Honour thy father and mother'. He is unsure whether Gertrude was guilty before or after the fact of the murder or whether she had a prior-existing adulterous relationship with Claudius. At all events he is disgusted at her speedy re-marriage.

Hamlet's anger stems partially from the need to know the answer to his questions. There are hints of adultery having been committed. The Commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' has of course been transgressed [as kill a king and marry with his brother] as Hamlet tries to provoke his mother into denying or admitting involvement in the murder. **The lexis used reflects the morality/vice conflict that, for religious people of the time, constituted the ongoing daily struggle against the evils of appetite: 'damned', 'blurs the grace', 'modesty', 'virtue', 'innocent', 'blister', 'false'. Even Heaven<sup>23</sup>** is ashamed, angry and 'thought-sick at the act.' Hamlet does not define clearly whether the 'act' he refers to is that of murder or adulterous lust. This perhaps is designed to have the effect of leading Gertrude into an admission or a denial on either count or both. It is a clever ploy such as one might expect from a student trained in the art of debate and public disputation, the use of rhetorical devices and logic.

Hamlet's abrasive manner frightens the Queen. Her fear ['Thou wilt not murder me?'] provokes a response from the hidden Polonius and Hamlet's instinctive suspicion it is the King leads to the impulsive killing of the wretched courtier. It is ironic that it is not the direct taking of revenge against the King but the 'rash and bloody' mistake of killing Polonius that precipitates an eruption into the open of the rotteness in the state of Denmark. From this point the play spirals swiftly into a series of catastrophes.

#### Examiner commentary

This allusive, intense answer focuses on key aspects of the passage (AO1) looking particularly hard at language range and tone (AO2) and the passage's implications for the play as a whole.

**23.** Attention to vocabulary and its effects



## QUESTION 2(B) HAMLET

'Hamlet is destroyed by his impulsiveness, not his uncertainty.'

Using your knowledge of the play as a whole, show how far you agree with this view of the character Hamlet.

Remember to support your answer with reference to different interpretations.

Hamlet is multi-faceted. **He has attracted a wide range of interpreters, from the dreamier Hamlets of Olivier and Gielgud to the more dangerous Hamlets of Jacobi and Branagh, or Tennant's melancholy and unpredictable prince.**<sup>24</sup> Hamlet's moods are swiftly changing, and drive the play. A.C. Bradley's procrastinator is also prone to wander in pursuit of ideas and - on an impulse - creativity takes Hamlet over and triggers a chain of events which will lead to the bloodbath of Act 5.

**Shakespeare's audience would have seen Hamlet as impulsive and unstatesmanlike**<sup>25</sup> - as demonstrated by his need to prove the Ghost's accusation. **Another incident of impulsiveness is his rejection of Ophelia in the so-called 'nunnery scene'**.<sup>26</sup> Her act of returning his letters and her apparently cooled feelings (both dictated by her father) have soured his trust in her in particular and women in general. The misogyny of the age, long-ingrained, is voiced in his comments about women's duplicity, emblematised in the image of them masking reality with foolishness.

**The arrival of the players triggers suddenly the idea of their enacting before the King a story that comes near the ghost's account of his death.**<sup>27</sup> This is inventive opportunism rather than impulse, though the very idea is spurred by the moment. There is no uncertainty in Hamlet's conviction that

.....the play's the thing  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.

24. Part which allows wide (cited) range of interpretations

25. Sense of response of original audience

26. Still keenly in focus

27. Demonstrates succession of stimuli in carefully built account



All uncertainty evaporates as he plans the test, writing some apposite lines to be inserted into the text of 'The Murder of Gonzago' improvisation (and late inserts into plays were much used by the acting companies of the day). Excitedly motivated, Hamlet mentors the First Player and cannot forbear being 'as good as a chorus' in his pointed commentary during the performance.

**We see here a Prince who, once engaged in a project, becomes fully involved, focused, pro-active, almost child-like in his enthusiasm.**<sup>28</sup> The outcome of 'the play within the play' is such a success that Hamlet becomes hyper-excited and ready to 'drink hot blood' and 'sweep' to his revenge as he had promised the ghost.

The thoughtful, contemplative scholar-philosopher has disappeared as Hamlet teases and misleads Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. His later refusal to murder the praying King is not uncertainty or cowardice so much as an intelligent judgement. It would be better to kill him when he is 'about some act/That hath no relish of salvation in't'. It is of the nature of tragedy that this act of logical, cold, mercy is misguided. Claudius is unable to pray, but Hamlet does not know this and spares him. The tragic hero is so caught in Fate's web that even doing right will not save him from his doom.

The most crucial and negatively productive impulsiveness is the killing of Polonius. It is an instinctive reaction to discovering someone is eavesdropping on his conversation with his mother. Hamlet strikes without a moment's hesitation. It is one of two pure acts of impulsiveness, yet it has the most crucial consequences. The second is when, returned in disguise from the voyage towards England, he leaps into Ophelia's **grave**<sup>29</sup>. This act is perhaps not as uniformly spontaneous as killing Polonius, for it is bound up with intense shock at learning of Ophelia's death and irritation at her grief-stricken brother's claims to love her and wish to be buried with her. Hamlet lacks all uncertainty as he steps forward and asserts 'This is I/Hamlet the Dane'. It is an astonishingly strong declaration of identity and is followed by an equally powerful declaration of feeling for Ophelia. It seems that Hamlet's return and his dismissive comments about Laertes' love for his sister makes Laertes readily compliant with the King's murderous plan.

Hamlet's final act of what might be considered impulsiveness is in accepting his part in the wager the King has made with Laertes that the latter will not score above three hits in a twelve round fencing bout. Hamlet is not obliged to accept the challenge, but feels honour-bound as a gentleman. He also has a depressed, fatalistic sense that he must accept his fate.

It is as if he has a premonition of death being close and accepts it. If he does not die, yet he will have to face death one day. **There is decisiveness and courage once again in Hamlet's choice, as there was with following the ghost. He is occasionally impulsive, but is mostly thoughtful and circumspect about his actions, their consequences, and the precariousness of one's hold on life.**<sup>30</sup> Where he is uncertain it is because he will not act unless he is sure of the grounds upon which he takes the action.

#### Examiner commentary

A thoughtful and carefully constructed essay (AO1) which looks at the question from a variety of points of view, finally tracing, with skill, the tragic thread of events and reaching a conclusion. Well illustrated with quotation and critical reference, with an additional awareness of context and possible audience response (AO5).

28. Still identifying facets of the hero

29. Sees key moments as it works to a conclusion

30. Balanced appraisal weighs up all evidence and draws conclusion.



## QUESTION 3 (A) MEASURE FOR MEASURE

Discuss the following passage from Act 1 Scene 3 , exploring Shakespeare's use of language and its dramatic effects.

To read the passage, please go to page 6-7 of the OCR sample assessment material: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/171432-unit-h472-1-drama-and-poetry-pre-1900-sample-assessment-materials.pdf>

This is a key section in the opening of the play, both for the plot and for our understanding of the character of the Duke. It is where he announces his intention to abdicate for an unspecified time, and allow his Deputy, Angelo, to rule Vienna in his place. He also reveals his reasons for taking this course of action: that he has let the Rule of Law become slack in the last fourteen years, matters need tightening up, and Angelo is a better man to do it than he is **himself**.<sup>31</sup>

The Duke reveals all this in conversation with Friar Thomas. The Friar's first interjection is rather pointless: "You will demand of me why I do this" – "Gladly, my lord". But his second **comment is much more cogent, challenging the Duke on the key point of why he cannot tighten up the laws himself. The value of the second character is also apparent at the end of the extract, when the Duke asks his assistance in donning the disguise of a Friar for the bulk of the play's action.**<sup>32</sup> The diction of the Duke's first speech, possibly the most autobiographically revealing in the play from "the fantastical duke of dark corners", contains many highly poetic phrases. He has no liking for "assemblies where youth, and cost, and witless bravery keeps", demonstrating **particularly economical use of language.**<sup>33</sup> "A man of stricture and firm abstinence" is also very tight use of language in summing up Angelo. "Stricture" means more than just "strictness", rather suggesting "restricting himself, repressing himself" (which I will explore further in my essay on power in the play).

**The Duke's explanation for his abdication involves many dramatic images. First of all, he uses the image of riding a horse, needing the "bits" placed in its mouth and possibly the spurs on the rider's heels ("curbs") to control the animal.**<sup>34</sup> The image of the rider and the horse is also picked up by Claudio later in the play. Secondly, the Duke talks of "an o'ergrown lion", meaning an old animal that can no longer hunt for its own food. Thirdly, he uses the metaphor of the whip made from binding together birch twigs which fathers used to discipline their children, but making it clear they will never use them, and so losing any deterrent value they may have. This reminds me of the old proverb, "Spare the rod and spoil the child", and there is a generally proverbial feel about much of this speech. It finishes with two shorter but very punchy images, "liberty plucks justice by the nose" and "the **baby beats the nurse**". **This sustained use of imagery throughout this speech powerfully explains the Duke's reasons for wanting the laws of Vienna to be tightened up, and sets up much of the "justice versus mercy" theme of the play.**

**31.** Passage's significance deftly placed

**32.** Useful discussion of dramatic purposes of dialogue

**33.** Careful unpicking of Duke's language as a clue to motivation

**34.** Also looks at images of restraint and control, linked to other uses in play

**35.** Sets passage in wider context of play's concerns



But why not do it himself? This is the substance of Friar Thomas' challenge, and very effective it is too. When the Friar suggests it would have been far more effective if the Duke had carried out this tightening up himself, far more "dreadful", the Duke brilliantly caps him by saying "I do fear, too dreadful", with heavy emphasis on the word "too". Since he was the one to blame for all this moral slackness ("scope"), he would then come across as a tyrant if he were the one to tighten everything up, someone who did not know his own mind, slack one moment and repressive the next. This strikes us as a rather selfish motive on the part of the Duke, more concerned with personal reputation than with the proper government of his city.

**Generally, a confusing picture of the Duke emerges from this scene: someone who would rather have been a hermit than a Duke, but who nevertheless has ruled Vienna for the past fourteen years and not made a very good job of it, and who now, in a piece of real cynicism and theatrical trickery, seeks to put everything right .<sup>36</sup>** An intriguing piece of scene-setting for the intriguing play that is to follow.

36. Neatly summarises effect of scene

#### Examiner commentary

A lively and thoughtful answer, (AO1) which looks both at the effects of language (AO2) and at the problems of characterisation and motive raised by this opening to a paradoxical and complex play. Good response to tone, and some useful and relevant discussion of the author's choices in establishing central concerns of the play (AO1).

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## QUESTION 3(B)

'A Play in which power is invariably misused.'

Using your knowledge of the play as a whole, show how far you agree with this view of *Measure for Measure*.

Remember to support your answer with reference to different interpretations.

It is a familiar saying that power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. In "Measure for Measure" we see so many examples of this, in power over other people, and in repressive power over ourselves. **There are so many examples of the misuse of power and very few where it is used well.**<sup>37</sup>

The Duke is the central enigma here. He has the power of an absolute monarch, something that would have been familiar to Shakespeare's audience, moving from the realpolitik of the Tudors to the **Divine Right of Kings of the Stuarts in 1603, the year before "Measure for Measure" was written.**<sup>38</sup> He is all-powerful, and yet has allowed the City of Vienna to fall into moral decay, hence his plan, initially at least, to abdicate for a time and allow Angelo to reform the place by a stricter enforcement of the laws. He tells Escalus he has deputed to Angelo "all the organs of our power". **But it's an abdication that has been poorly thought through, with echoes of Lear's plans to abdicate in favour of his three daughters whilst retaining "the name and all the additions to a king".**<sup>39</sup>

The Duke's abdication, however temporary, is a classic misuse of power. In Claudio's eyes, the Duke's appointed successor uses power no better. He wonders if Angelo is singling him out for punishment just for the power surge he feels: "A horse whereon the governor doth ride/... that it may know/He can command, lets it straight feel the spur."

Angelo's qualification for the job, in the Duke's eyes, is his control over himself, his power over himself: "a man of stricture and firm abstinence". He famously meets his match in Isabella, who could also be described in exactly the same terms. **But then at the end of Act I, scene .iii the Duke seems to hint that his purpose is not so much to reform Vienna as to test Angelo. He knows that his Deputy "scarce confesses that his blood flows", eerily foreshadowing Lucio's judgement of Angelo as "a man whose blood is very snow-broth". The "fantastical Duke of dark corners" is hard to pin down from the very outset.**<sup>40</sup>

In the two great scenes between Angelo and Isabella (II.ii and II.iv) we see the clash of two frighteningly repressed egos. **In Jonathan Miller's 1974 version, we see Angelo slide his hand onto her knee as he says "now I do give my sensual race the rein", and in another production Angelo's sexual arousal was actually evident to the audience.**<sup>41</sup> Ironically, when Lucio – who in so many ways is the moral commentator in this play – tells Isabella to use her power to soften Angelo, she repudiates the idea – "My power? Alas, I doubt". These two scenes are surreal wrestling matches in which Angelo very much thinks he has come out best and has more power over Isabella than she does over him.

37. Clear starting position established

38. Sense and details of context

39. Link to other relevant play: context

40. Argument develops with good use of textual detail

41. Critical positions established by reference to current productions



In the midst of this fascinating power-play, we see the Duke, in disguise as Friar Lawrence, playing first with Juliet, pretending to comfort her and then, even more chillingly, pretending to comfort Claudio in his condemned cell: both terrifying misuses of power. Later on, still in disguise as the Friar, he deceptively promises to give Barnadine “present shrift”, meaning the Roman Catholic ceremony of Confession and Absolution.

**The**<sup>42</sup> Duke has this absolute power in both narrative terms, controlling the story of the play, but also dramatically, as the one who appears to pull all the strings. But how absolute is this power? At one point he seems to concede it may have limitations, when he describes Ragozine’s highly convenient death as “an accident that heaven provides”. There are few signs of any limitations in Act V, where the Duke powerfully controls events to the very end. He announces he will tell Isabella the truth only at the last minute, “to make her heavenly comforts of despair when it is least expected”, which seems close to playing God. **Coleridge**<sup>43</sup> described “Measure for Measure” as Shakespeare’s most painful work, and scenes like this make us understand why. The Duke continues the play-acting by greeting Angelo warmly and having Isabella arrested for slandering the Deputy. Again it is only Lucio who seems to be able to stand outside all this deception and manipulation.

**Some people class “Measure for Measure” as a “Problem Play”, and it is not hard to see why from its conclusion. There is little sense at the end that “All’s Well That Ends Well” (another play often placed in this classification). Wilson Knight sees the play as a New Testament Parable, arguing**<sup>44</sup> The ethical standards of the Gospels are rooted in the thought of “Measure for Measure”. But this is not the play I see. Rather than a feeling of justice done and equilibrium restored, there is an overwhelming sense of having witnessed a terrifying misuse of power on so many different levels.

#### Examiner commentary

A lively and thoughtful answer, highly alert to the disturbing nuances of the language of the play and behaviour of the Duke (AO1) while seeing the play both in its literary and historical context. Some useful critical support is used in argument (AO5).

**42.** Returns to key concerns of play and question

**43.** With further critical support

**44.** Places play in generic context and reaches clear conclusion



## QUESTION 4(A) RICHARD III

Discuss the following passage from Act 4 Scene 3, exploring Shakespeare's use of language and its dramatic effects.

To read the passage, please go to page 8-9 of the OCR sample assessment material: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/171432-unit-h472-1-drama-and-poetry-pre-1900-sample-assessment-materials.pdf>

**From the fourth act of Richard III Richard of Gloucester (later Richard III) has things less his own way than in the early part of the play.<sup>45</sup>** Thus we see that Tyrrell, though he is prepared to arrange the deaths of the princes in the Tower (one of them actually King Edward V, of course), is much less close to Richard than the 'deep revolving witty Buckingham' Richard has just dismissed, and this makes Richard more vulnerable and alone as Tyrrell is not a close friend and kinsman like Buckingham. He has Richard's needs less obviously in view than Buckingham would have done. For him it is merely a job. Nevertheless he opens the speech with a sequence of superlatives: **'The most arch deed of piteous massacre/ That ever yet this land was guilty of' and the King is judged morally in no uncertain terms, too 'the bloody King.'**<sup>46</sup>

The important action in this speech is less about Tyrrell than Dighton and Forrest who actually did the murder. These are probably the same murderers who drown the Duke of Clarence in a Malmsey butt in Act 1. But Clarence was a difficult, unreliable man - in the dream-speech the ghost of Warwick calls him 'false, fleeting, perjured Clarence.'

**These, by contrast, are pre-adolescent boys in their 'summer beauty', a prayer book on the pillow, lips as delicate and fresh as red roses . The effect on the murderers is subtly different from Act 1. Early in the play the murderers had an argument about whether conscience should interfere with their work. Now both murderers are unanimous, not divided, in despising the despicable crime they have committed. Even though they are both highly experienced, 'flesh'd villains, bloody dogs', they weep 'like children' at the deed, empathising perfectly with their victims.<sup>47</sup>**

They view the victims not just as innocent victims, though, but as if they were still living in the Garden of Eden, and that nothing better had been made since the world began: 'The most replenished work of nature, / That from the prime creation e'er she framed.' **By calling their 'innocent' arms 'alabaster' it is though they were dead already, killed by Richard, turned to stone tomb-effigies.<sup>48</sup>**

Tyrrell, a minor criminal appalled at what a master criminal can do, prophesies that nothing in all of English history is going to be worse than what King Richard has just done. **Shakespeare does not directly dramatise the scene. He uses Tyrrell, who was not there, to convey all that can be known about it. He does this in a rather formal way, with rather formal details such as the 'red roses' and 'alabaster'. His speech thus gives us the legend of the smothered princes, though with a touch of vagueness about who did what to whom because we hear it secondhand .<sup>49</sup>**

**45.** Answer opens by usefully placing context within the dramatic action

**46.** Close AO2 focus on language in relation to plot and characterisation

**47.** References to corresponding situations elsewhere in the play amplify effects of close reading

**48.** Useful comment on imagery, developed later

**49.** Apt comment on dramatic, emblematic method



When the King arrives Tyrrell does not know precisely where the boys' bodies are, again confirming that Richard III is not a play about what actually happened but what we might like to believe. Throughout this brief exchange Tyrrell seems on the back foot, not very enthusiastic about his employer or what he has done. **Richard's bright even gloating questions ('Kind Tyrrell, am I happy in thy news?') are usually in full blank verse lines. Tyrrell's brief responses are monosyllabic.**<sup>50</sup>

**50.** Significant technical point

If Tyrrell is uncertain and humble as he takes his leave, Richard, characteristically, shows a biting resolve. **The extract ends with one of Richard's many soliloquies which usually, as here, share his motives and strategies with the audience. His choice of language has a hint of irony, particularly his euphemisms for death ('Abraham's bosom,' 'hath bid the world good night'), and as usual he lists his potential victims without any thought of their personality, feeling or the law.**<sup>51</sup> For instance marrying his brother's daughter Elizabeth of York would be uncle-niece incest. He doesn't seem to have noticed. As always he thinks the audience is still on his side, He went to Anne, whose death he celebrates in this speech, as a 'jolly thriving wooer'. Now, however, we are not so sure.

**51.** Precisely focused comment on tone and effect

#### Examiner commentary

A succinct, deftly focused and lively response (A01) to the set passage: close attention is paid to language and imagery, and the part played by the episode in the play's developing action is clearly and usefully demonstrated (AO2). Analysis is precise, and response to tone is confident and thought-provoking.



## QUESTION 4(B)

'The chief attraction of *Richard III* is the presentation of innocence under threat.'

Using your knowledge of the play as a whole, show how far you agree with this view of the play *Richard III*.

Remember to support your answer with reference to different interpretations.

**Richard is one of the most dominant roles in Shakespeare; he is onstage for two-thirds of the text, almost continually involved in the action.**<sup>52</sup> It is impossible for the audience to get away from Richard for very long and it is inevitable, given how frequent and intimate are his speeches and asides, that the audience should come to see things his way, as a 'determined villain' cutting through the human web (made up of real people) that stops him 'getting' the crown. Some actors, like Simon Russell Beale, prefer a psychological approach, but the most common performance, like Anthony Sher's, is rhetorical and melodramatic.

The first scene of the play demonstrates that it is impossible to be as **interested in his innocent victims (many of them left over from Henry VI Part III) as in the charming and dominant Richard himself,**<sup>53</sup> with his celebrated opening soliloquy, delivered, says Theatre Director Alexander, 'as if to an audience of apprentice Richard III's'. Richard reaches the Lady Anne literally over the bodies of his Lancastrian enemies. **Yet with a devastating mixture of rhetoric (apposition, stichomythia) and sexual allure she is seduced in minutes,**<sup>54</sup> even if it remains mystifying why, even to Richard himself: 'Was ever woman in this humour wooed / Was ever woman in this humour won?'

Act One culminates in the miserable drowning of Clarence, foretold in his dream, and makes up a series of scenes in which the would-be King, confiding in the audience constantly, proves to them that he is capable of knocking over any number of 'innocent' Lancastrian and Yorkist opponents. **The effect of this spectacle of innocence not just under threat but profitably destroyed or absorbed by Richard is to assume that Richard is a force of nature, and the audience must go along with it.**<sup>55</sup>

After all he suggests Anne is a fool for giving in so easily, that bishops are half-wits or hypocrites, so easily does he use them in a pantomime, and that King Edward should have taken better care of his brother Clarence. This is not a poisoned dwarf but, on his own influential estimation, 'a marvellous proper man', intelligent, resourceful, and attached, in Buckingham, to the second most alluring figure in the play. **They form a double act reminding us that 'all the world's a stage', encouraging each to impersonate villainy better than the other 'I can counterfeit the deep tragedian / Murder my breath in middle of a word.'**<sup>56</sup> Richard is something like the devil in the old Morality plays: we should learn from him, not hate him: 'Thus, like the formal vice, Iniquity, / I moralise two meanings in one word.'

**52.** Carefully argued opening passage establishes argumentative position: useful reference to contemporary performances

**53.** Proposition takes question on directly, with critical support

**54.** Idea of 'counter attraction' – Richard's seductiveness – being developed here

**55.** Sees drift of play as running counter to proposition in question: develops argument

**56.** Stimulating proposition about the innate theatricality of Richard's appeal and methods, together with reference to the Morality tradition



**In the second act Richard moves like a poisoned 'bottled spider' around the Court, massacring the Queen's relatives, then starting on her children. Here, for the first time, Richard's amoral vitality is questioned.**<sup>57</sup> Edward V wonders how well history remembers things, possibly anticipating Richard's harsh treatment by posterity. The Duke of York takes him on in playful but often pointed repartee. His famous reference to Richard's deformed shoulder makes a high point in Olivier's film. **As the roll call of innocent victims grows, they are presented less often as dupes than as questioning figures ('so cunning and so young is wonderful').**<sup>58</sup>

Queen Elizabeth, in her great (unanswered) prayer to the Tower of London is made to speak not as Richard's enemy and Queen, but as a woman:

'Rude ragged nurse, old sullen playfellow / For tender princes, use my babies well'

Richard is not a King to use babies, or anyone, particularly well, but in the second half of the play it is the forces of the 'innocent' or mainly innocent, like Lord Stanley, that gang up against him. **Almost as soon as he gains the crown, audience sympathy is cut off progressively from him, clearly signalled when the unsympathetic Tyrrell provides such a moral speech about the slaughter of children in the Tower.**<sup>59</sup>

The end of the play, Bosworth, casts Richard as a symbolic figure of evil, Richmond as the victorious knight, and the reuniting of white and red roses as the ceremony of innocence, Holy Communion. By this time Richard no longer believes in his own innocence, and dies self-condemning: 'Is there a murderer here. No. Yes, I am.' **The innocent victims are no longer under threat, but a series of terrible and threatening ghosts of revenge, troubling Richard's slumbers, rubbing the edge off his sword.**<sup>60</sup>

#### Examiner commentary

An elegantly argued case (AO1) is made in this top band answer, and develops from its initial proposition – Richard is the focus at the start of the play, but as the plot develops the balance of sympathy, and of power, shifts. Reference to the text is consistently precise and detailed, and the argument consistently develops. The essay uses carefully chosen contemporary and historical interpretations and performances as evidence (AO5).

**57.** As essay develops, highly apposite detail supports argument

**58.** General point well supported

**59.** Apt and very useful reference back to context passage

**60.** Confident and convincing conclusion rounds off elegantly developed argument



## QUESTION 5 (A) THE TEMPEST

Discuss the following passage from Act 3 Scene 1, exploring Shakespeare's use of language and its dramatic effects.

To read the passage, please go to page 10-11 of the OCR sample assessment material: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/171432-unit-h472-1-drama-and-poetry-pre-1900-sample-assessment-materials.pdf>

This scene contrasts with the comedy of the preceding scene, where Caliban sings joyfully of the freedom he hopes to gain. **Prospero has set Ferdinand to work moving logs, to prove himself worthy of Miranda.**<sup>61</sup> The tension has been raised by her telling Ferdinand her name, against her father's wishes.

In offering himself, Ferdinand's language is that of a prince, quite formal, though he breaks the flow at 'I would not so!' reminding us that he believes his father has drowned. He proffers himself to Miranda (in his princely position in society) saying he has unwanted kingly status since the death of his father. **His use of the repellent image of the flesh fly as he describes his labours comes as a surprise,**<sup>62</sup> making us aware of the heat and the physicality of the 'wooden slavery'. Through performing his lowly task he becomes her menial - 'her patient log-man' - her slave. Their roles are reversed.

In contrast, **Miranda's four-word question is simple**<sup>63</sup> - perhaps spoken in a tone of wonder, though it might be felt by the audience that it was clear at the end of Act I that Ferdinand had fallen in love with her. His answer comes in the form of a **formal oath, a promise, reminiscent of the words of the marriage service - 'Do love, prize, honour you'**<sup>64</sup> - its sacramental tone heightened by calling upon heaven and earth to witness the fact.

Though Ferdinand's language is quite formal, its fervour reduces Miranda to tears, and shows Prospero, watching them secretly, that what he has hoped and worked towards is coming true. There is some interesting imagery of potential fecundity, of fertility here: Prospero who has engineered the meeting, calls down blessing, saying it 'breeds', an image picked up by Miranda in her next speech - **'...all the more it seeks to hide itself, the bigger bulk it shows'**<sup>65</sup>. The audience is already allowed to believe that this thread of the story is reaching a happy conclusion.

Interestingly, the syntax of the lovers' speech changes here. Ferdinand's simple 'Wherefore weep you?' elicits more complex phrasing from Miranda. Her tone and, indeed, her command of the scene changes subtly - however, her language is still almost shockingly simple ('I am your wife if you will marry me') and very emphatic ('but I'll be your servant, Whether you will or no'). 'Here's my hand.' And mine' **sounds like a formal engagement**<sup>66</sup>, an affirmation or troth-plighting, as well as a touching farewell.

61. Context of scene established

62. Attention to detail of language

63. Register of the two lovers

64. Sacramental tone of Ferdinand's utterances

65. Unpicking of imagery here

66. Sees ritualistic nature of the exchange



The audience will have been concentrating on the two of them, almost forgetting that Prospero is watching 'unseen'. **They exit 'severally',<sup>67</sup>** having touched hands – not together. Their separation has been made safe by their troth-plighting. Above, Prospero's reaction to the event is slightly guarded - 'so glad of this as they I cannot be'. It is not a surprise to him but he confirms the summative nature of his ambition for the lovers with 'my rejoicing at nothing can be more'. The scene ends leaving us wondering what magic is to come for which **Prospero needs to consult his 'book'.<sup>68</sup>**

**67.** Details of staging spotted here, usefully

**68.** Good sense of part and whole.

#### Examiner commentary

A succinct but accurate and insightful reading, sensitive to the byplay of affection shown in the language, and to questions of status. Episodes in the extract – and the overarching situation – are carefully traced.

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## QUESTION 5(B)

'The lovers are the chief source of hope in *The Tempest*.'

Using your knowledge of the play as a whole, show how far you agree with this view of *The Tempest*.

Remember to support your answer with reference to different interpretations.

Prospero has engineered the meeting between Ferdinand and Miranda, wishing that they will fall in love so that in their marriage they will eventually unite the realms of Milan and Naples.

**Described by Traversi as 'a symbolic ground for reconciliation'<sup>69</sup>** this is certainly Prospero's chief hope, the most important outcome of the supposed shipwreck. As he says to Miranda, 'I have done nothing but in care of thee.'

Is his hope justified? Will they be effective rulers? Prospero seems conscious of the failings that made him lose his dukedom. He has educated his daughter with the specific hope of returning to Milan in mind. When in 'didactic' mode his attitude to her is severe and demanding: she is apparently innocent and obedient to him, but the context scene shows plainly that she has a mind of her own and can express herself in a very straightforward manner. **She has a core of determination that is very strong, and the ability to express it clearly. She has been educated as one of noble birth: the game of chess, later in the play, also shows her skilled at a pastime expected of high-born women.<sup>70</sup>**

**In the Globe's 2014 production, it was made clear that Prospero, played by Roger Allam, loved his daughter dearly but always knew he had a duty to give her up to her destiny as a queen.<sup>71</sup>** His constant monitoring and correcting of her behaviour throughout the play shows a commitment to social preparation with a bigger agenda than just good manners: she is a queen in waiting.

Prospero has perhaps less justification for basing his hope in Ferdinand, whom he has only just met. His initial reaction to Ferdinand seems unaccountably brutal but Prospero seems disquieted by her rhapsodic reaction to him – 'might call him/ a thing divine, for nothing natural/I ever saw so noble'. Prospero is quick to point out the limitations of her experience of men, and to test her new suitor. Given the history of Prospero's relations with Ferdinand's family, that is perhaps understandable. He has no reason to put trust in Ferdinand's father or, by implication, in Ferdinand either. He tests Ferdinand first by giving him an arduous and menial task. **Jonathan Bate points out that its purpose seems more to 'elicit submission' – to test him to defeat - than to prove virtue.<sup>72</sup>**

**69.** Critical support for argument

**70.** Clear address to the manner and matter of Miranda's education

**71.** Reference to recent production history as part of argument

**72.** Further useful critical support



However, in the context scene we see a glimpse of a future ruler – ‘I do think a king’ – stoically accepting the role he was born to, but showing in ‘I would not so’ that he is not over-eager to replace his father. More is seen of his likely royalty later in the play: before the Masque, he is ready to obey Prospero’s commands to ‘be more abstemious’ and during the ‘majestic vision’ he calls Prospero ‘So rare a wonder’d father and a wise’ showing his reverence for wisdom and skill, surely a sign of his understanding of the role of authority which he will himself have to take on. **When he discovers that ‘the seas are merciful’ and his father lives, his introduction of Miranda as his future queen is happily confident.**<sup>73</sup> And for his part, having found Ferdinand worthy, Prospero greets them both with: ‘Fair encounter/Of two most rare affections.’

So we can see that there is good hope for the future of the two Italian states. **There are also, however, other sources of hope as the play comes to an end. Gonzalo, already seen as a wise and kind adviser, has had a vision of a utopian land which he defends against the cynical Antonio and Sebastian.**<sup>74</sup> More importantly, Prospero himself is returning to ‘my Milan’ a changed man, ready to rule. He has given up his magic – broken his staff and drowned his book – and, having learned a lesson, will govern single-mindedly until Ferdinand and Miranda succeed him: ‘every third thought shall be my grave’. Ariel’s magic will guarantee them a safe and ‘expeditious’ voyage home, before he achieves his long-hoped-for freedom.

Nevertheless, Gonzalo’s ‘Golden Age’ cannot be hoped for. Antonio has rebuffed Prospero’s pardon and he and Sebastian have no belief in any ‘brave new world’. **Their last speeches show these noblemen to be as base as the drunken Trinculo and Stephano, seeing Caliban as ‘marketable’. Caliban himself has his island back, but little else to hope for.**<sup>75</sup>

**73.** Development of our sense of Ferdinand carefully traced

**74.** Answer widens to look at grounds for ‘hope’

**75.** .....and the ambivalence of the play’s ending.

#### Examiner commentary

A compressed but detailed and accurate evaluation (AO1) of the role of the lovers in the play which traces, with detailed evidence, their relationship and part in the action. Supported by reference to critical views (AO5) it makes a good case for their central role in the play’s plot and outcome.



## QUESTION 6 (A) TWELFTH NIGHT

Discuss the following passage from Act 3 Scene 1, exploring Shakespeare's use of language and its dramatic effects.

To read the passage, please go to page 12-13 of the OCR sample assessment material: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/171432-unit-h472-1-drama-and-poetry-pre-1900-sample-assessment-materials.pdf>

Olivia starts this passage speaking fairly **formally, as befits a countess – 'beseech', 'abuse', 'construction'. But the accusation of 'enchantment' shows how amazed she still is at her own feelings and behaviour.**<sup>76</sup> ('Even so quickly may one catch the plague?' she asked earlier.) Only 'enchantment' can have transformed her so. She sent the ring, she admits, not just after Cesario but 'in chase of you'; yet he is the one, she says, who is baiting her honour with his pack of 'unmuzzled thoughts'. **(The references here to the 'chase' or hunting and bear-baiting, and to being 'a prey' in line 19, relate to similar images of the cruel side of human relationships elsewhere in the play: Orsino pursued by his 'desires, like fell and cruel hounds' or Malvolio angry at 'the whole pack of you'.)**<sup>77</sup> Olivia is still, at the end of her first speech, on the verge of open, passionate declaration, her heart hidden only by flimsy 'cypress'.

Viola's simple reply ('I pity you') aims to discourage what she knows is Olivia's misguided passion but also no doubt expresses her real feelings: **she too is desperately in love with someone who seems unlikely to be able to respond. But Olivia seizes on her answer as a crumb of hope.**<sup>78</sup> Viola remains firm in her reply, 'No, not a grize', still making sure she doesn't sound too encouragingly sympathetic – and perhaps aware that in a sense Olivia is indeed her enemy ('we pity enemies') or at least her rival for Orsino.

The clock strikes, indicating 'the waste of time'. Olivia may feel that her moment for winning the beloved has passed. **The actor playing Viola may also look sombre at the thought of time passing – she is aware of the danger of ending 'like Patience on a monument'. On the other hand we have also seen her take a more optimistic approach to time: 'O time, thou must untangle this, not I!'**<sup>79</sup>

**76.** Very close attention to choice of language (in relation to status) and its effects

**77.** Useful pursuit of threads of imagery shows wider contextual sense

**78.** Good analysis of over-arching situation

**79.** Sense that lines may be played in a variety of ways



Olivia still cannot resist saying how attractive she finds Cesario. **Her talk of 'harvest' and reaping is physical and openly sexual. Now she attempts to shake off her emotion with the brisk or jovial 'There lies your way, due west'. 'Then westward-ho!' replies Viola in the same spirit, using the familiar cry of the Thames boatmen.**<sup>80</sup> Both speakers are trying to keep off dangerous ground. Still shocked, perhaps, at Olivia's advances – or wryly amused by them? – Viola seems only at this point to remember the purpose of her visit: 'You'll nothing, madam, to my lord by me?' Olivia goes on to **use the intimate 'thou' in place of the more formal 'you' they have used so far.**<sup>81</sup> Viola's answer, all monosyllables, is intended to sound direct and honest: 'I am not what I am' and her disguise often seems on the brink of collapse. **At line 38 there is a switch to rhymed couplets. This suggests, after the less emphatic, faster-moving blank verse – lines 29-35 were like a verbal fencing match – that here is the expression of true, innermost feelings. It is almost as if the couplets mimic the idea of a love which is returned, as if they can somehow clinch Cesario's love. But love cannot be forced – 'fetter' is an unfortunate choice of word to precede the reference to love which is 'given unsought.'**<sup>82</sup>

As Olivia swears by roses and 'maidhood' Viola is no doubt once more aware that this is just what she would like to say to Orsino. Viola's may sound cold and unfeeling to Olivia in lines 48 to 53, but she still does not want to give Olivia false hope. She may sympathise but cannot return Olivia's feeling and from the point of view of the audience she is simply speaking the truth about herself – she wants the love of no woman. It enhances the impression of Viola's integrity that even in disguise she can speak truth. Couplets, again, are suited to this honesty.

Leaving at last, Viola keeps Olivia at a distance: **'And so adieu [more formal and final than "fare thee well" would be], good madam'**.<sup>83</sup> Olivia does not try to proclaim her love again as she did in lines 40-43, but even now she will not give up hope entirely: 'Yet come again...'. The final half-rhyme 'move'/'love', however, suggests the lack of any real confidence that she can win Cesario. It also registers, more openly, her awareness of how very unlikely it is that she can be brought to reciprocate Orsino's love.

#### Examiner commentary

A confident and highly detailed response to language and its effects: analysis draws on wider knowledge of the play, but also draws out the nuances and changing colours of the set episode, and shows a carefully-argued understanding of verbal and poetic devices. (AO2) well developed, consistently detailed and analytically sound (AO1).

**80.** Entertaining sense of context and social effects and references

**81.** Awareness of language conventions – technical confidence

**82.** Detailed discussion of verbal effects of verse, and of word choice

**83.** Awareness of language conventions (also with 'deplore' below)



## QUESTION 6(B)

'A play in which love proves to be full of surprises'

Using your knowledge of the play as a whole, show how far you agree with this view of love in *Twelfth Night*.

Remember to support your answer with reference to different interpretations.

'If this were played upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction.' *Twelfth Night* is a play full of surprises, and love (whether mutual or self-love) provides many of them.

Orsino is so in love with his notion of Olivia – or, as has often been said, with love – **that for much of the play he functions, surprisingly, not as a ruler but as someone who spends his time listening to music, wallowing in 'sweet beds of flowers' with his 'Love-thoughts', or talking to Viola/Cesario.**<sup>84</sup> She has some surprises for him too, telling him, for instance, about the loyal love 'women to men may owe'. Viola has to cope with the shock of Olivia falling so quickly and misguidedly in love with her. **Olivia seems often to be surprised at herself, in a daze, a fever - horrified that 'even so quickly' one may 'catch the plague' of desire. Cesario's beauty surprises her into a passionate love declaration.**<sup>85</sup> Again this is no proper conduct for a countess: **her desperate pursuit of Viola is part of the carnival topsyturvydom, the world of surprises, which Renaissance audiences associated with the Twelfth Night feast.**<sup>86</sup> Similarly Malvolio, a steward, outrageously aspires to marry his mistress; his transformation by desire – whether for Olivia or for his self-aggrandisement – is even more extreme than hers. **It is as if these characters' reason has been swept away by 'an emotional thunderstorm' (Anne Barton).**<sup>87</sup>

What happens to Malvolio does strike an audience as at first surprising: the preposterous appearance of the once sober steward cross-gartered, yellow, smiling, partakes of the incongruity on which all comedy relies. **But it is not, on reflection, truly surprising: Malvolio from the beginning is so 'sick of self-love', that he is ripe for Maria's deception. He is all too ready to believe that 'all that look on him ...' Similarly we cannot be very surprised that Sir Andrew does not succeed in love, in spite of his best attempts to have 'Odours', 'pregnant' and 'vouchsafed' at the ready to help him. He never has a chance with Olivia.**<sup>88</sup> It seems unlikely that he was 'adored' even 'once'. Even his name, 'Aguecheek', is against him, as is Malvolio's – 'ill will'.

**84.** Opening position established with deft textual illustration

**85.** Apt but brief use of context passage in essay opening

**86.** Contemporary reception and context – misrule and feasts

**87.** Useful critical support

**88.** Directly takes on issue of 'surprise' – cogently evaluating degrees of it, and looking at use of names



A similar point can be made about the central love relationship in the play. It begins amazingly swiftly: after only three days' acquaintance the Duke has 'unclasped/To thee the book even of my secret soul'. But the outcome – the union of Orsino and Viola – is logical, carefully prepared.

**Because of Viola's disguise they can discuss love with a freedom that would usually be difficult for an Elizabethan gentlewoman. (No doubt their relationship seemed all the more natural in early performances because they were both played by male actors.)<sup>89</sup>** We see these two together, as we don't see Orsino and Olivia. We see an intimacy develop between them, above all in Act Two, Scene Four. **It cannot entirely surprise an audience when Duke and 'boy', whose relationship we have watched as it grew, are the ones who eventually come together, not Duke and distant lady.<sup>90</sup>** But Viola has also performed the same sort of service for Olivia, breaking her out of her self-imposed seclusion, preparing the way for Sebastian. (For Olivia it must be as if Cesario has pondered her offer of love 'given unsought' in Act 3 Scene 1 and come to the wise decision of accepting it.)

Undeniably there is a sense of surprise in the dénouement of Twelfth Night. Viola becomes evidently available to Orsino and his alleged longing for Olivia melts away as quickly as did Olivia's desire to spend seven years as a weeping 'cloistress'. There is a sense of magical transformation: if Sebastian is alive then 'Tempests are kind, and salt-waves fresh in love'. Sebastian is so overwhelmed by Olivia's love in Act Four Scene Three that he marvels at the air and 'glorious sun' and wonders whether he or the lady is mad. (It is a surprise indeed, thinking back to Olivia's desperate longing in the set passage, to hear from him that she is now, thanks to his responsiveness, behaving with ease and discretion – 'With such a smooth, discreet, and subtle bearing') **Samuel Johnson simply could not stomach such transformations: 'The marriage of Olivia ... wants credibility, and ... exhibits no just picture of life.'<sup>91</sup>**

But as if partly to answer Johnson's objection, Feste's final song is not about magic and surprises but about everyday life and the rain that 'raineth every day'. The persona in the song 'came, alas, to wive'. Feste himself does not, apparently, love anyone: he remains separate from others, mocking their follies ('Now the melancholy god protect thee ...') and does not let himself in for the surprises, pleasant or otherwise, of intimate relationships. It could be argued that some unpleasant surprises may still be to come for the other characters. Maria had fun with Sir Toby plotting against Malvolio, but we may wonder how wise she is to go as far as to marry him.

**Clifford Leech suggests that Orsino's final couplet about Viola as his 'fancy's queen' 'leaves us securely in the world of make-believe' – but perhaps the reality of marriage will differ from expectation.<sup>92</sup>** Does the reference to 'fancy' suggest that he has actually learnt nothing during the course of the play? Viola, in the unsurprising role of wife, may have less chance to change him than she did as Cesario. The comic genre makes it predictable to the audience that she will win her love in the end, but to her the process was altogether more astonishing. She had no idea how it would 'fadge'.

#### Examiner commentary

This high top band answer is packed with apt textual references, supported by some shrewdly chosen critical comments (AO5), and sustains an entertaining and fluent argument (AO1) about how far, in the context of comic hints and conventions, anything in such a play may really be seen as a 'surprise'.

**89.** Sense of context, decorum and original audience's response

**90.** In discussing 'surprise', looks at satisfactoriness of narrative outcome

**91.** Apt, if grumpy, critical allusion, well used

**92.** A really interesting line of speculation develops here



# SECTION 2

## DRAMA AND POETRY PRE-1900

### QUESTION 7

'Love is invariably possessive.'

In the light of this view, consider ways in which writers explore love and possession.

'O Lady! we receive but what we give,' says Coleridge in 'Dejection'. He is talking about a wider relationship with the world, but such reciprocity could also be taken as the recipe for a perfect, non-possessive love. **Often, however, the line between possessive and more mutual forms of love can be a fine one.**<sup>93</sup> Can we sympathise with the love of Marlowe's Edward and Gaveston if it is so exclusive (or possessive) that it leaves no room for Isabel? In singing the tale of the knight in 'Love' does the speaker unreasonably take possession of Genevieve's emotions and so of her, or does the tale act as a catalyst for her to admit her responsive love?

How possessive we judge such love to be will depend on its motive and its context. The spirit of Christabel's mother, who comes back purely to try to protect her daughter, could seem just as possessive as the King who apparently cares nothing for his Queen 'seeing I have Gaveston'. **But the mother wants to save her child from Geraldine's evil whereas Edward's reckless desire pushes aside a woman who is prepared to love him.**<sup>94</sup> In Edward II there is also a political dimension to the exclusivity. The King, in concentrating all his affection on his favourite, ignores the reality of the political situation and even makes Gaveston's death inevitable. **Some members of sixteenth century audiences will have condemned the lovers' exclusive relationship less out of simple homophobia than because it prevents a workable, mutual relationship between the King and his lords, thus rendering the kingdom unstable.**<sup>95</sup>

**Genre, as Edward's political situation may remind us, is an important factor in the way love is presented.**<sup>96</sup> Romantic poems often concentrate on private emotions and contemplations; their speakers or characters rarely have the public responsibilities of a monarch. Another difference is that poetry can slowly explore elements of a mood or relationship. By contrast in a performance, where one cannot turn back the page, transitions tend to be more emphatic. Drama thrives on confrontation and physicality. It is therefore well suited to portraying **possessive love: in Edward II there is much scope for embracing the beloved, thrusting others away, and forcibly pulling possessive lovers apart; Isabel not only wishes that 'mine arms could close this isle about,/That I might pull [Edward] to me where I would' but says – a useful prompt for the actor playing the part – that her 'hands are tired with haling of my lord/From Gaveston'. Such physical action would be all the more prominent on an Elizabethan stage,**<sup>97</sup> where architecture and the lack of scenery combine to emphasise the actor and his or her gestures and costume as well as words.

**93.** Question explored with reference to both texts

**94.** Both texts in play

**95.** Contemporary response

**96.** Generic considerations: poetry tends to the private, drama the public

**97.** Contrasted with drama's physicality



The more nuanced approach to love is apparent in 'Frost at Midnight'. One may wonder, at first, whether the speaker is being possessive about the 'inmates of my cottage'; the love for 'My babe so beautiful', and particularly the plans for his future, could sound possessive and controlling. But the poem gives a clear sense of the child as a separate person, not just an extension of the adult; the movement of the verse imitates the baby's breathing as it fills up 'the interspersed vacancies/And momentary pauses of the thought'. **(Contrast the way Isabel simply expects her son to do her will, until in the end he asserts his independence by arresting her and executing Mortimer.) The programme for the child – he will 'wander' in nature and as a result be moulded by God – is meant to be liberating, not controlling.**<sup>98</sup>

He will not, like his father, be 'pent', and his relationship with God will be two-way, symbiotic: God will 'mould thy/Spirit, and by giving make it ask'. **That children should be valued and free, not adults' property, is a familiar Romantic idea – for instance William Blake wants them to live in joy, free of parents' worries, child-labour and tyrannical priests – but this sort of non-possessive love extends also to other relationships.**<sup>99</sup> The speaker of 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison' at first is frustrated to have missed the sights his friends will see, but in imagining their experience he participates in it, contemplating 'With lively joy the joys [he] cannot share'. **He emerges with them, as his spirits lift, from the dark dell to the broad view of the 'many-steeped tract magnificent' and the sea, from possessive deprivation to selfless involvement.**<sup>100</sup>

Love in Coleridge does not, as in Edward II, have direct political consequences. But in 'Fears in Solitude' there is an awareness, amid fears of Napoleonic invasion and condemnation of public corruption, that individual love has a wider context. **The personal leads, ideally, to the universal: in 'The Eolian Harp' the speaker may 'possess' the cot and the maid but he has been granted them by God's 'saving mercies'. In spite of the use of the word 'possess' this is not a possessive love but part of a larger involvement in what is called, in lines added to the poem in 1817, 'the one Life, within us and abroad.'**<sup>101</sup> (The end of the poem presents a less pantheistic but still supra-personal vision.) Surrender is seen as natural and spontaneous, as when the Mariner blesses the water-snakes 'unaware'. No such progress towards wider love seems to be possible for Edward II or for Isabel: he moves on from Gaveston to Spencer; she from the King to 'sweet Mortimer'. They cannot all 'walk together to the kirk'; prayerfully loving 'Both man and bird and beast'.

Love seems more material in Marlowe and there is a striking lack of higher ideals about love in Edward II. There are touching moments like Edward's simple answer, when asked why he loves 'him whom the world hates so': 'Because he loves me more than all the world'. But Gaveston's love seems originally to be motivated as much by desire for power, for possession, as for Edward. **He wants to be able to 'draw the pliant king which way I please' – sounding as much like a Machiavellian plotter as a besotted lover.**<sup>102</sup> Other claimants to possession are excluded: Isabel and the lords cannot enter this world. (Marlowe was no doubt aware of real court favourites' schemes to marginalise their rivals for royal attention: something contemporaries noticed particularly in the court of James VI of Scotland.) **Arguably there is a similarity with the way Geraldine takes control of Christabel, putting her into a trance where she 'passively did imitate' her 'look of dull and treacherous hate'.**<sup>103</sup>

**98.** Both texts in play. Subtle unpicking of each text with very apt detail

**99.** Contextual views of freedom in other writers

**100.** Still in focus on question

**101.** Sense of the wider contextual world

**102.** Motivation in Marlowe

**103.** And in Coleridge



**The rarity of unalloyed mutual love in Edward II results partly from Marlowe's manipulation of his sources: for example, as Richard Rowland points out, he makes Gaveston a commoner 'distinguished only by his sexual allure and his refined aesthetic sensibilities' rather than, as in the chronicles, an aristocrat whose family had long served the crown.**<sup>104</sup> There is a contrast too, with Shakespeare's play about the deposition of a monarch, **Richard II**<sup>105</sup>. **Edward claims that he will 'hang a golden tongue about' Isabel's neck because she has 'pleaded with so good success' for the repeal of Gaveston's banishment.**<sup>106</sup> The necklace without the love, like the crown without the power, would be of little use to the wearer. Isabel indicates that the only jewels she wants round her neck are Edward's arms but an embrace too can be a sign of possession rather than love: Geraldine's arms become 'the lovely lady's prison'. The Ancient Mariner's albatross, when hung around his neck, is another sign of lack of mutuality: when he 'inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen' he ends the good relationship between the crew and the bird they had received 'with great joy and hospitality'. Apparently he has broken a chain of natural connections in which the spirit of the land of mist and snow 'loved the bird that loved the man/Who shot him with his bow'.

**The Mariner, the spell-bound Christabel, and perhaps Edward in his obsessive love for Gaveston, can be seen as 'possessed' – completely taken over by something more extreme than possessive emotion only.**<sup>107</sup> Geraldine takes Christabel over and is herself, according to a note by the author, possessed by the devil. Perhaps the 'woman wailing for her demon lover' in 'Kubla Khan' is another victim. (Literal belief in the supernatural was more common in Marlowe's day, but Romantic poetry often uses it as a way of exploring such enigmatic psychological states as Geraldine's or the Mariner's.)

Lust too – the 'Loveless Lust' and 'sensual Passion' which torment the sleeper in variant versions of 'The Pains of Sleep' – possesses the desirer with the desire to possess. Characters in Edward II are presented as more or less lustful in different productions. **Derek Jarman's 1991 film adaptation includes a lustful Mortimer whom at one point we see in bed with the Queen, but the text appears to suggest that he desires to possess not so much her as the power that comes with her**<sup>108</sup>: 'The prince I rule, the queen I do command'. Jarman sees the physical relationship of Gaveston and Edward positively, while an Elizabethan production may have interpreted homosexual desire as by definition lust – irrational, possessing. This is uncertain, however, in view of the frequent blurring of the edge between close male friendship and homosexuality in Renaissance culture.

Therefore in both the poetry of Coleridge and Marlowe's Edward II love is not 'invariably' possessive, but the potential for it to become so seems always to be there.

#### Examiner commentary

A detailed and stimulating examination of the key issues, informed throughout by a sense of genre – dramatic detail, and the other contexts offered by the writers' works (AO3, AO5). Shows close attention to the details of language (AO1) but also has a strong sense of effect on an audience, whether in the theatre or as a reader. Well contextualised historically, and keeps both texts fully in play throughout (AO3, AO4).

**104.** Marlowe's use of sources

**105.** Other texts as context

**106.** Absence of mutuality in both texts

**107.** Still completely in focus on wider contexts

**108.** Use of production details



## QUESTION 8

'Good writing about sexual relationships is invariably moral.'

In the light of this view, consider ways in which writers explore the morality of sexual relationships.

**Milton's 'Paradise Lost' was written within the moral context of Christian seventeenth century England;**<sup>109</sup> to be more precise Milton's moral framework was a Puritan one. He uses the relationship of Adam and Eve, seeing their relationship as the forerunner of all relationships between men and women, to explore notions of moral union. In Book One, Milton the narrator had stated that he wished to 'justify the ways of God to men' and in Book Nine he further develops this idea of a moral purpose to his writing. As he stated, he wanted to write a Christian epic to supersede the literature of earlier ages and replace it with a tale of 'heroic martyrdom.'

In contrast 'The Duchess of Malfi' is written within the context of early seventeenth century Jacobean theatre. One of the typical features of the genre is to explore sexual relationships that challenge received notions of moral boundaries. In this play the relationship between Antonio and the Duchess subverts social expectations of marriage in that not only does the Duchess marry beneath her but she also does the wooing. The taboo of incest is also explored through Webster's portrayal of Ferdinand. **Perhaps less subversive is the portrayal of the Cardinal and his mistress Julia in that it accords with the prevailing view of the day that the Catholic Church was particularly corrupt.**<sup>110</sup> **In this way Milton's writing seeks to moralise, a view supported by the fact that for a time 'Paradise Lost' assumed an authority almost on a par with the Bible itself, whereas Webster's writing seeks to shock, a feature of the gothic theatricality of Jacobean drama.**<sup>111</sup>

**Books Nine and Ten of 'Paradise Lost' deal with the fall and its consequences. The relationship between Adam and Eve**<sup>112</sup> is central and some views of the pre-lapsarian pair suggest that in their innocent state there is no sexual tension and indeed that sexuality in the poem is used to reflect their fallen state since after they have both eaten the apple their love-making is described in terms of inflamed passion to suggest immorality. Others suggest that Milton draws a distinction between conjugal love and immoral lust as their 'connubial love' described earlier in Book 4 has been deliberately used by Milton to contrast with the description at the end of Book 9.

**109.** Contexts of each text established, especially in relation to genre, using text itself

**110.** Historical/Social attitudes

**111.** Purposeful distinction drawn

**112.** Discussion of Milton's treatment of sexuality



The union between Adam and Eve is initially presented as an ideal marriage. However, as their dialogue in Book Nine unfolds, an interesting tension between them appears and a slightly duplicitous tone characterises the dialogue between them at this stage. **Throughout the poem Milton uses symbolic imagery drawn from the emblems of the day, engravings accompanied by mottos spelling out moral lessons to be drawn from the picture. Images of clasped hands signified fidelity in love and this is an image Milton constantly returns to in the poem.**<sup>113</sup> The debate between the pair in Book Nine has an uneasy tension as neither partner is entirely honest with the other. Something drives Eve onward and the image of her leave-taking would have had a particular resonance for the reader of the day familiar with the emblematic symbol of fidelity, the clasped hands: 'Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand/ Soft she withdrew.'

In 'The Duchess of Malfi' we are given a more subversive version of marriage. While Milton presents us with an ideal and then explores how that ideal could fail because of tensions within, **Webster is interested in a heroic challenge to the norms of the day.**<sup>114</sup> In Webster's depiction of the relationship between the Duchess and Antonio he seeks to challenge the moral notions of a good marriage whereas Milton presents us with an ideal union and explores how it could fall from the perfect state. Some critics have linked this exploration of failure with the need for Milton to come to terms with the failure of the revolution that he had so loyally supported as an apologist for Cromwell's regime. Interestingly, Antonio's feelings for the Duchess are initially expressed with the hyperbolic chastity of a courtly lover who admires yet would never dare to express sexual feelings: 'In that look/There speaketh so divine a continence/As cuts off all lascivious, and vain hope.' He goes on to suggest 'her nights- nay more, her very sleeps/Are more in heaven than other ladies' shrifts'. The language is exaggeratedly moral and yet as the action unfolds and we compare the Duchess's behaviour with this idealised view of her, Webster's purpose seems to be encouraging us to reject this sanctified view of femininity and admire the warm-blooded Duchess who dares challenge her society's views of what is moral between man and woman.

This is particularly evident in the scene where the Duchess courts Antonio. She has to introduce the subject of marriage; Antonio would never dare ('If I had a husband now...'). Yet his feelings for her are clear from his comment that she should give her husband all her 'excellent self' in a couple'. She responds to his bitter rejection of marriage with 'fie fie, what's all this' and the symbolic offering of her wedding ring to help him 'see more clearly' reinforces the subversive suggestion of role reversal in terms of both class and gender. **The exchanges become shorter and full of sexual tension ('You have made me stark blind') until the Duchess puts her ring on his finger as he kneels: a visual, theatrical and Freudian representation of role reversal.**<sup>115</sup> This scene, immoral by the standards of the day, is presented by Webster as touching and full of human feeling. 'This is flesh and blood sir/Tis not the figure cut in alabaster/ Kneels at my husband's tomb'. The Duchess describes her feelings on claiming him as husband as 'like a widow/I use but half a blush in't'. **Webster explicitly suggests that the relationship is sexual but that it is moral in that the union is a marriage in front of a witness. The Duchess's comment that 'What can the church force more' is sometimes read as an immoral challenge to church authority but such contracts were seen as legally and morally binding in Webster's context.**<sup>116</sup>

Milton, however, in Books Nine and Ten, tends to link sexuality with immorality. Satan's temptation of Eve is associated through language with a sexual seduction based on flattery ('All things thine/By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore/With ravishment beheld'). Milton's language suggests Eve is too easily seduced. 'He ended, and his words replete with guile/Into her heart too easy entrance won.' Her eating of the fruit is linked to appetite, 'an eager appetite, raised by the smell/So savoury of that fruit.' The moment of the fall is symbolically represented by a wound to nature with connotations of a physical loss of innocence.

113. Contextual support

114. Comparative treatment of the play continues argument: sees it as challenging contemporary norms

115. Excellent detailed textual support

116. Looked at in the context of contemporary morality



'She plucked, she ate;/Earth felt the wound'. Emblematic and symbolic images are subsequently woven together. **The clasped hands become one slack hand. Faded flowers symbolic of a fallen female sexuality are now shed. Milton describes Eve's behaviour in terms of a sexual fall. 'Defaced, deflowered and now to death devote.'**<sup>117</sup>

**The couple's initial decision to face death does bear a similarity to the Duchess's defiance in the face of death**<sup>118</sup> ('Come violent death') but the Duchess faces death alone without Antonio. For Adam and Eve this unity does not last as Milton suggests they have not yet atoned for their disobedience to God. Their lovemaking is debauched and leads to bitter recrimination: 'Carnal desire inflaming, he on Eve/Began to cast lascivious eyes, she him/As wantonly repaid'.

Milton's own ideas, which accorded with the prevailing views of the day, suggest that woman was created by God to be man's companion. The creation myth that had Eve made out of Adam's rib suggests that man is first and woman secondary. Although modern readers may find this analysis of sexual relationships to be at odds with our ideas of equality we can see that at least Milton seems to be suggesting in the later books of 'Paradise Lost' that the new found honesty of Adam and Eve means that they are working together rather than against one another.

**Unlike Milton, who gives us two views of sexuality within one relationship, the pre-lapsarian and post-lapsarian, Webster gives us contrasting views of sexuality by dramatising different relationships and encouraging us to judge them in terms of corruption.**<sup>119</sup> For instance, although the brothers disapprove of the Duchess's marriage, their motives for doing so are not moral ones. Having suggested that Ferdinand implies the Duchess is immoral because of her sexuality, Webster alerts us to Ferdinand's incestuous desires for his sister with his increasingly disturbing sexual language that even frightens his brother. 'Why do you make yourself/So wild a tempest?' Webster creates in the Duchess a female character who challenges the notion that women should be subordinate because they are morally weaker in their relationships with men.

**Milton suggested that Adam was 'fondly overcome with female charm' and modern readers may sympathise with the more subversive morality of the play 'The Duchess of Malfi' than Milton's more didactic moral purpose but Webster's presentation of the Duchess both subverts and conforms to the moral notion that women lead men to danger. Although we admire the Duchess's marriage as a challenge to her hypocritical court society, it can be read as a cautionary tale if we view it from Antonio's perspective.**<sup>120</sup> 'There is a saucy and ambitious devil/ Is dancing in this circle.' **We must be careful of reading it only within a modern moral framework.**<sup>121</sup>

At the end of the play, the Duchess **has bowed to no one but now she kneels alone before the heavens: a very visual symbol of her morality in the face of a corrupt world. In contrast, Milton presents Adam and Eve together at the end of Book 10 as having learned a moral lesson. Their humility before God has none of this tone of defiance. 'Repairing where he judged them prostrate fell/Before him reverent.' Webster suggests that the Duchess will gain paradise whereas we know that Adam and Eve now face exile from Eden.**<sup>122</sup>

#### Examiner commentary

A very detailed examination of two contextually rich texts, pervaded with awareness of their original generic reception and their ambiguity (AO3). There is very detailed textual support for points made, and critics are used judiciously to shape the argument (AO5). Both texts remain in play throughout (AO4), but this answer is also unusually sensitive to the moral attitudes of the worlds in which the texts were produced. Fluent and detailed (AO1).

117. Detailed attention to symbolism

118. Sexual defiance across texts

119. Subtle contrast

120. Texts compared in terms of the question in summation

121. An apt warning!

122. In conclusion comments on the contrasting effects of the two texts



## QUESTION 9

**'Men may seem more powerful than women, but the reality is very different.'**

**In the light of this view, consider ways in which writers explore power and gender.**

Middle and upper class Victorian women often lived, or believed they lived, in a comfortable, protected yet synthetic **world**.<sup>123</sup> In Ibsen's *A Doll's House* the titular image of the doll's house conveys this sense of confined escapism (there is also talk of gilded cages) whereas the Maud-narrator thinks of the heroine as damaged by her vapid if privileged lifestyle, 'faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null.'

Despite occasional bursts of resentment, such as this, for much of the poem the Maud narrator prefers to see his would-be beloved in terms of conventional lyricism, walking and talking under calling rooks, turning the daisies rosy by up-ending them with her delicate feet, and hurrying to meet her rather odd lover in **a garden of elegant flowers**.<sup>124</sup> In *A Doll's House* Krogstad, the blackmailing lawyer, knows all about Nora's sheltered world, in which women are so insulated from the outer male world of crime and the law that they scarcely need to think themselves responsible if they forge a signature on a legal document. Krogstad is aware Nora is hiding behind a double standard, and so, later in the play, is her husband Torvald, when he complains that his little song bird, his little squirrel, by forging that same document, has disgraced him.

It is difficult to see what the women of these texts can do about this double standard. They are trained in 'accomplishments': to paint unthreatening water-colours and play the tarantella unthreateningly, to ride side-saddle with grace, flick a tambourine and chew on sweet macaroons. They are good at flirtation but not necessarily at managing or transferring the family property. **How guilty the generally passive Maud is of consorting with her unstable and unsuitable neighbour the Maud persona, whom many critics consider psychopathic, is unclear.**<sup>125</sup> The relationship, indeed the whole poem, is presented from the Maud-persona's point of view, not Maud's.

As **Christopher Ricks**<sup>126</sup> has pointed out, for him it is as if 'other people are on another planet', and often even in the most lyrical love passages, such as that where the persona claims to have 'led [Maud] home, my love, my only friend', and dreams about the breezes that flow from the cedars of Lebanon, Maud herself is conspicuous by her absence. But she does seem, by one means or another, to have got close to the persona, to have come into that fatal garden of talking flowers (his obsessions?) and may even return his feelings, precipitating the melodramatic climax in which her brother attempts to preserve her honour and is killed. It is difficult not to conclude that in writing about the male world of duelling, with its brutal code of honour, **Tennyson is showing how distant and separate his heroine is from that masculinised world, pining away presumably with a mixture of guilt, grief and frustration, a death all the more poignant because the male-orientated poem has no means of describing it directly, so that some readers miss it altogether, or find it hard to discern the precise moment when it takes place. Maud, the only significant female presence in the poem, is thus marginalised even by her own death.**<sup>127</sup>

**123.** Skilful evocation of context, with apt quotation

**124.** Worlds of heroines clearly and economically evoked

**125.** Issues arising from texts discussed

**126.** Useful critical support

**127.** Apt comment on an odd absence in Tennyson poem



Nora's behaviour is much easier to read. She is the dominant – if not the most powerful – figure in her establishment, partly because her husband is bent over his books or his legal documents, supplying her (sometimes rather patronisingly) with pet-names and housekeeping money: 'It's a sweet little bird, but she gets through a terrible amount of money.' **She, shut out from what Shaw calls the 'serious business of the world' to which Torvald (rather pompously) commits himself,**<sup>128</sup> feels frustrated, patronised and bored. Her moment of self-realisation forms the climax of the play and comes from two sources. The first is the death of the intelligent and accomplished Dr Rank. A meticulous scientist, he is able to trace the stages of his destruction from hereditary syphilis, a disease Ibsen also uses as a metaphor of creeping Victorian corruption in a companion-play, *Ghosts*. Rank has clearly been carrying on a long silent love affair with Nora, a committed flirtation she joins in with by flipping his face with her silk stockings. But when Rank, like a drawing room magician, disappears forever beneath his 'invisible hat', having shown Nora little more of her power than that she can make men want to go to bed with her, it is the first stage in the dissolution of Nora's domestic paradise too.

The second development is that a former schoolfriend, Mrs Linde, less clever, capable and ambitious than Nora, gets mixed up in Nora's affairs and shows, in her marriage to Krogstad, a much more functional (and equal) model of domestic give-and-take than Nora herself has with Torvald. These episodes dismay Nora, even if she can't focus her reaction to them fully. The final realisation comes when her all-powerful husband refuses to protect her from the possible legal consequences of her forged promissory note. She had expected he would - she is, in her own view, at worst an ignorant damsel in distress. **But when he rants vulgarly at her about her responsibilities, Nora moves swiftly to use what power she has. Her response is not, like Maud, to pine for death as a woman whose honour has been questioned, but an altogether more radical solution, leaving her husband and children, and slamming the family door, as it were, in the face of all Europe: possibly the single most effective piece of feminist propaganda of the entire nineteenth century.**<sup>129</sup> Shaw argued for the radical power of the play's ending. In his view Ibsen was out to show that all Nora's 'illusions about herself are now shattered': If there was to be hope for bourgeois marriage, it could only come from the journeys of women like Nora to a radical reassignment of gender roles.

Tennyson's poem is less interested in a radical solution to the woman question. Maud shows many typical characteristics of a mid-Victorian Romantic heroine trapped in a pseudo-Gothic world, less rebel than victim. When she dies, the pain is celebrated in some of the most potent lines about bereavement Tennyson ever wrote: 'Ah, that 'twere possible/After long grief and pain/To find the arms of my true love/ Round me once again.' Tennyson called these lovely lines the 'germ of Maud'. **Yet they were not originally written for the heroine of Maud but for his dead friend, Arthur Hallam, more than twenty years earlier. It could be argued that once again Tennyson's poem concentrates on male emotion, rather than male emotion shared with a female, and in this case it is male emotion drawn from a faint homoerotic context.**<sup>130</sup> Thus when Tennyson's persona goes off at the end of the poem to fight in the Crimean War, it is no surprise that he chooses the defiant, militaristic option, asserting what macho powers he has left, abandoning the poem's faint feminist sub-text altogether.

**Nora's dramatic departure is another matter. She plays the strongest card of power she has, her absence. In the Victorian context of the play, where characters and concerns (unlike Tennyson's aristocratic settings) are all bourgeois, it does not look likely that Nora will stay away too long - the children will be a significant magnet.**<sup>131</sup> Some critics even argue that the play is less about feminist independence than it is about teaching its heroine to live in the residually patriarchal establishment without the damaging illusions she brings to the first part of the play, such as 'I'll be a fairy and dance on a moonbeam for you Torvald'. But this has never been the majority view. **The play was quickly read as an endorsement of Nora's 'desperate plunge into the unknown', as critic Stephen Whicher puts it.**<sup>132</sup> **In Germany, opinion was so outraged by Nora's action that Ibsen could not get his play produced at all unless Nora retreated from her decision to leave Torvald before the curtain fell.**<sup>133</sup>

128. Comparison developed

129. Interesting comparison of heroines' reactions to their situations

130. Development of context

131. Developed comparison of context in second text

132. Useful critical support

133. Performance context



Where Tennyson writes a monodrama about the disastrous, semi-vicarious love of a narcissistic and probably unbalanced young man, who in his saner and serener moments pretends to a power of insight he doesn't always possess, Ibsen writes a play about the moral development of a woman who comes to realise how damaged she and those around her are by the way she and other bourgeois women are encouraged to live by means of self-seeking illusions. **Tennyson's hero, in his anti-capitalist diatribes, his distaste for rampant industrialisation and creeping philistinism, offers a powerful critique of mid-Victorian society, but whether he will sort out these or the Condition of Women questions by fighting that 'giant liar, the Czar' is a moot point. It is much more certain that by slamming her door on a house of lies, Ibsen's powerful female heroine faces up to truths the whole world eventually came to acknowledge.**<sup>134</sup>

**134.** Comparison of outcomes concludes essay

Examiner commentary

A fighting answer, which entertainingly (AO1) looks at the ways in which both women in the compared texts deal with forms of imprisonment by the male-created society in which they live: the essay is alert to the more disquieting aspects of *Maud*, with its gothic and melodramatic qualities, and to Ibsen's ironic stance. Criticism is judiciously used to support the argument (AO5) and the social and psychological mores of the contexts are well established (AO3). Both texts are in constant play throughout. (AO4)

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## QUESTION 10

'Forbidden tastes are sweetest.'

In the light of this view, consider ways in which writers explore the attraction of that which is forbidden.

**Oscar Wilde's characters are frequently attracted to that which is forbidden<sup>135</sup>** – in *An Ideal Husband* most notably Sir Robert Chiltern, who starts off his political career by selling a Cabinet secret, probably to satisfy his mentor, Baron Arnheim. **But Wilde is also very suspicious of morals in literature, calling them in one of his children's stories 'very dangerous'. It is no surprise, then, that Chiltern's is not the only attitude to forbidden tastes presented in the play.<sup>136</sup>**

**Christina Rossetti<sup>137</sup>** is, on the face of it, even less likely than Wilde to approve without strong qualification characters who are drawn to the dark side. Most of her poems are powerfully moral in their effect, advising us in orthodox, even puritanical terms that the wages of sin is death, and that eating forbidden fruit cannot easily be put right. In 'Good Friday' her character stands guiltily under Christ's cross, begging Him for forgiveness. This poem says nothing at all about the possible attractions of forbidden pleasures, merely the importance of rejecting them. Yet in her most famous and surprising poem, 'Goblin Market', the effect is different, partly because it is not Christ but an apparently ordinary Victorian woman who brings salvation to her friend who has eaten the forbidden fruit; and she brings it not by avoiding the fruit-juice, but by letting the goblins smear it across her clenched teeth, and ultimately, it seems, drinking it. In this poem Rossetti does not write about the religious life as one of resistance, avoidance, and vigil, but of commitment to what John Bayley has called the 'gluttonously intense drama' of the forbidden fruit.

**Chiltern's attraction to the forbidden fruit of 'gold' was just as decisive as Laura's<sup>138</sup>**, and he too needs a devoted friend like Lizzie to get him out of trouble. Lord Goring, unlike the saintly and heroic Lizzie, would rather be thought of as lazy and aesthetic, and possibly dabbling in forbidden pleasures himself. **In Wilde's other texts, the dandy is often a source of temptation and even evil, as in the case of Lord Illingworth in *A Woman of No Importance*.<sup>139</sup>** Yet in *An Ideal Husband* Goring traps the villainess, Mrs Cheveley, by means of a stolen brooch which he recognises, and he also teaches the 'perfect' Gertrude Chiltern that some imperfection is desirable and even necessary in human affairs. When she visits him in his rooms to ask him for help she has not considered that her husband might assume his friend has betrayed him. But by forcing her to admit her own apparent or actual folly there can be a new beginning for her marriage, **as well as confirmation of the creative value of being aware of, and even touched by, forbidden pleasures.<sup>140</sup>**

**135.** Introduction to discussion of key terms in relation to first text (AO1)

**136** Contextual/ biographical view informs answer (AO1)

**137** Second writer introduced comparatively (AO4): key terms explored, with reference to religious and social context of works, (AO1) and critical support. Strong sense of effect of verse (AO1, AO3)

**138** Deft cross-link pulls texts together (AO4)

**139.** Wider knowledge of author's work helpfully used (AO3)

**140.** Consistent and sustained focus on central issue; using detailed reference to text (AO5, AO1)



**Both writers focus upon the difficulties all women**,<sup>141</sup> like Gertrude, experience when they are exposed to the 'alternative' world of forbidden pleasures. Mrs Cheveley, who has, according to a critic, 'not one past, but several', has made a career out of trying to make one fit another. She features in the play as thief, blackmailer and possible seducer of Lord Goring. **It is clear she succeeds in balancing all her balls in the air with some difficulty, looking a little too available with 'too much rouge and not quite enough clothes', suggesting the prizes she wins are not 'for good conduct'**.<sup>142</sup> Rossetti's Laura, in some of the contextual readings of 'Goblin Market', represents the common path taken by the Victorian prostitute, into the world of forbidden pleasure through commercial greed or want. The many fruits offered by the goblin men symbolise the many ways in which a Victorian maiden can fall, reflected in the fact that at this stage **the poem becomes raucous with shrill cries and clatters along in its doggerel metre**.<sup>143</sup>

One reading even links the poem with Christina Rossetti's work at the Diocesan Penitentiary for Fallen Women, Highgate, which began in 1859, the year of the composition of 'Goblin Market'. In this reading, Lizzie might fulfil the role of the carers and enablers who, **like Rossetti, worked at the centre, while Laura, the victim, symbolises the many Victorian girls whose lack of 'restraint' (or just good fortune) led them into the deep waters of forbidden desire**.<sup>144</sup> The rhythms of the writing suggest control slipping away:

Like a vessel at the launch

When its last restraint is gone

Rossetti may, therefore, have had good reasons to write a poem about sexuality and addiction (among other things) although her own life was so pious and free from temptation that she refused to tread on pieces of paper in case a sacred name was written on them. **Her poem is so full of sub-text that some critics, like Germaine Greer, have argued it has no one meaning, reading it as an allegory with several layers, so it can be read as a view of, for example, Victorian advertising, sex, alcoholism and the lack of freedom for women in marriage**.<sup>145</sup>

Wilde's play, too, majors in sub-text. He knew a good deal more about the 'forbidden' world than Rossetti did, and at the time *An Ideal Husband* was staged in the West End, had already been visiting Alfred Taylor's 'male brothel' in Westminster for several years. It can even be argued that the 'forbidden pleasure' that the shadowy figure Baron Arnheim introduces to Sir Robert is not 'power' but 'homosexuality'. Wilde 'queer coded' the other text he wrote at this time, *The Importance of Being Earnest* fairly fully, and though the effect in *An Ideal Husband* is less clear-cut, it is fascinating to speculate that it is very obviously a play about a man whose 'hidden life' can demolish his career if the secret of it is ever revealed, and that while the play was running evidence was being collected about Wilde's sexuality that would soon destroy him in open court and kindle one of the great scandals of the Victorian age.

**Wilde loved to mix forbidden pleasures with secrets, and this play abounds in them: Chiltern's crime, Mrs Cheveley's character and past, even Lord Goring's unexpected good nature (so well-hidden his father mistakenly thinks him 'heartless'). Rossetti has a great delight in secrets too**,<sup>146</sup> and not just in what modern feminist critics tend to call her 'Signature Poem', the light and playful 'Winter, My Secret'. Some of her poems that seem to deal with the greatest pleasure, like the pleasurable pain of 'Echo', are so secretive as to their subject that they have no context at all. It is as if the lover (if it is a lover) were concentrating only on the state of absence - or on what John Bayley has called 'missingness'. Explanations as to whether the poem is based on 'forbidden pleasures' or not are perhaps best left to biographers (who have indeed nevertheless often been unable to provide them).

**141** Sustained comparative focus (AO4) (AO1)

**142** Apt and helpful detail, looking at effects and historical context (AO3) (AO1)

**143.** Deft comment on effect (AO1) Developed into helpful historical/contextual note (AO3)

**144.** Clear sense of context in which text was written (AO3) developed in succeeding lines

**145.** Clear sense of context in which text was written (AO3) developed in succeeding lines

**146.** Comparative focus sustained and developed, with well-supported biographical threads and instances of modern readings. (AO4) (AO3)



The speaker of the historical poem 'Soeur Louise de la Miséricorde' is less careful about forgetting her memories of forbidden pleasure, with the result that this poem is more troubled by recall of 'longing and love, a disenkindled fire' and by 'trickles' and 'drops' of memory in a 'bottomless gulf of mire.' It looks as though Rossetti's people are preoccupied not just with the attraction of forbidden desire, but with the need to transcend it, and that this is often a very difficult process. Sometimes, as in 'When I am dead' and 'Remember', they are so keen for the memory of love and desire not to give pain that they do not wish to be remembered at all.

To conclude,<sup>147</sup> Rossetti is often an orthodox Christian poet whose poems turn away from a fallen world and stress the need to wait patiently for a better life to come. A good example is 'Shut Out', where the depiction of nature recalls the Garden of Eden and humankind's exile from it in Genesis. Yet some of Rossetti's writings do deal with sexual energy and fire, and not always in a straightforwardly didactic way. 'Goblin Market' was quite seriously reprinted in the man's magazine, *Playboy* in 1973 as 'Goblin Market: A Ribald Classic', complete with erotic illustrations. The text suggested that 'hidden between the lines of this nice Victorian nursery tale lurk monsters from the Freudian night.' So the doggerel verse of 'Goblin Market' with its (multiple) nursery rhymes, looking like a fable for children or Victorian nonsense verse, can also be read as a pre-Freudian labyrinth of **desire**<sup>148</sup>. Wilde's play is also constructed around deep questions about the value of ideals of perfection as moral compasses in human life, given that so many people have experimented with forbidden experience. Occasionally Wilde lifts the cover away from the drawing room and its elegant dialogue and we see the gulfs of forbidden behaviour beneath. His conclusion is that Gertrude must learn to live with her husband as he is, and with his past, with all its imperfections and hidden acts and desires. Both writers like to suggest rather than state, but under Rossetti's ballad and Wilde's witty society drama lie some deeply problematic 'forbidden tastes'.

#### Examiner commentary

This high top band answer deftly keeps both texts in play throughout (AO4), while offering both confident biographical and social comment (AO3) – supported by references to the writers' wider work, and the world in which they live – and an assured sense of contemporary views and reception of the texts (AO3, AO5). The candidate's use of detailed textual comment gives authority to a fluently developed comparison – both texts are in play throughout, but each is substantially examined in its own right, and the argument develops in complexity and interest to reach a lucid conclusion (AO1). This is a highly confident and informed response.

**147** Though a conclusion is not demanded by the question, - the prompt asks 'consider' - the threads of the argument are impressively pulled together in this final paragraph: each text is measured against the prompt statement (AO4), and seen in the light of its effect (AO5) and context (AO3).

**148** Consideration of effects on a modern audience (AO5)



## QUESTION 11

'Conflict in literature generally arises from misunderstanding.'

In the light of this view, consider ways in which writers make use of misunderstanding.

Candidate style response not available yet



## QUESTION 12

**'Rank and social status are enemies of happiness.'**

**In the light of this view, consider ways in which writers explore the effects of rank and social status.**

Class differences have long been used as a device in Literature to create effective reader/audience-provoking unhappiness. Matters of class are present in both *The Merchant's Prologue and Tale* and *She Stoops to Conquer*. Snobbery is a rich source of comedy whether it is the cruel ironic humour of the Merchant or the more light-hearted touch of Goldsmith.

**Though in religion, political thought and economic structure medieval England was vastly different from the more secularised eighteenth century, society was still highly stratified. In the Middle Ages the feudal system partitioned society into those who fight, those who pray and those who work.<sup>149</sup> By the eighteenth century changes had come about. The 'upper sort' - aristocrats and gentry - was still the governing class, the 'middling sort' had emerged as a discrete group, and the 'lower sort' formed the base of the social pyramid.<sup>150</sup>**

**149** Social context of first text clearly and confidently established (AO3)

**150** ...and second text. Comparative stance is becoming clear. (AO4)

Chaucer and Goldsmith very early in their texts situate their lead characters precisely in their ranks. **Januarie is identified in line 2 as 'A worthy knight'. He is rich [has 'heritage'], owns 'toun and tour', lives an idle, sexually promiscuous life, and, like many Italian knights, lives in a 'paleys' in a town (Pavia) rather than on a country estate. His 'friends', companions and advisers are men of slightly lesser rank, but are gentlemen of some education. His household seems extensive and the wedding feast is lavish.<sup>151</sup>**

**151** Januarie's aristocratic status established by close reference (AO5)

At *Hardcastle Hall* the main characters are all of gentry status. There are servants and 'several shabby fellows' in the alehouse, but their role is minor. Sir Charles Marlow, being a knight, is of slightly higher status than his friend and there are no representatives of the nobility or bourgeoisie. Januarie's chosen spouse is described not only as 'a maiden in the toun' and 'of beautee' but also of 'greet renoun/Al were it so she were of small degree'.

Their marriage is a **mismatch of rank, May being clearly of a lesser rank than Januarie. There is some ambiguity in the description of her that hints at a possible bar to their future married bliss. She does not behave like a well-brought up young woman who is virtuous, elegant and cultured. The ease of her attraction to Damyan, her readiness to deceive, the brazenness of the garden assignation and the roughness of their sexual encounter all betray her vulgarity.<sup>152</sup>**

**152.** Confident, well-illustrated discussion of May's status (AO5)



Damyán is a 'servant traitour', behaving less than appropriately for his rank, and there is no truly loving gentleness in the phrase 'in he throng'. However, the biographical blazon of Januarie, plus his attitude to marrying May and the account of his lifestyle given by himself, telegraphs to the reader that the Merchant is being heavily ironic when he calls him 'worthy'. If there are doubts about the propriety of May's origins, then there is certainty that Januarie has degraded his rank. The narrator's own autobiographical Prologue has already prepared the reader to be cynical. This 'worthy knight', judging by his past and present, falls far short of the knightly ideal. His chosen 'maiden' too is perhaps not all she might appear to be either. **By contrast, Kate Hardcastle, masquerading as a maid, has no intention of allowing Marlow any liberties.**<sup>153</sup>

Tacked on to the possibly ambiguous description of May is the comment that 'she were of small degree'. **An alliance between a very rich knight and a renowned beauty of another class would be regarded as a mis-match in Chaucer's time since, whatever we might think today, it was then common custom for marriages to be made by partners from the same rank. Chaucer's listeners (most likely a court audience) would probably assume that the marriage is doomed.**<sup>154</sup> And, of course, the young wife quickly tires of her rich catch and is easily drawn into adultery. In a very loose sense then social status does inhibit happiness though Januarie remains blissfully, ignorantly happy – except for a moment in the garden. Socially, the lust affair with Damian is another misalliance; it has similarity of age and rampant sexual attraction to fire it and they deserve each other. Difference of social origin is not an enemy to the happiness May and Damian seek. Amusingly, in the tainted garden Januarie has had landscaped [is it a perverted Eden or a Garden of Earthly Delights?] with Damyán already ensconced in a bush prior to the ugly action in the pear tree, May claims snobbishly 'I am a gentil woman and no wenche.' She is assuming a role and qualities that she has no claim to other than by the elevation of her marriage. She who is about to betray her husband, her marriage vows, her religious duty and her sex may claim the status of a knight's wife – as Lady May - but does not behave like a lady. She is about to fornicate with her secret lover and does so in a manner unbecoming – though certainly suitable to rutting animals. Januarie, already so steeped in the Deadly Sin of lust, is perhaps then suitably punished for this less than virtuous approach to marriage and for being drawn into an alliance with a much younger woman and one 'of small degree'.

The enemy to happiness in *She Stoops to Conquer* stems not so much from class difference, but from Marlow's diffidence with women of his own rank and his less-than-gentlemanly attitude to girls of the common sort. Marlow's misperception of Kate as a barmaid in an inn is an indictment of his failure to live up to the gentlemanly ideal of courteous and respectful treatment of women at any level in society. Hastings, Marlow's friend and companion, is in many respects a fine young man, but he plans an elopement and the secret theft (or retrieval) of Constance Neville's jewels.

The prospective coupling of Kate and Young Marlow is that of two people attracted to each other and matched in rank and age. Both are educated, lively, and sophisticated to a degree. Their fathers' plan to link the families hinges on the young people getting on together; which they do as long as Marlow thinks Kate is a maid at the 'inn'. As in Chaucer's time, eighteenth century marriages between young people of some status were arranged. But while Januarie, old and alone, makes his own choice as a rich man with his 'heritage, toun and tour', and May's family appear to have no input, Mr Hardcastle reflects the more liberal and flexible developments of the later age. He says quite clearly to Kate, 'Depend upon it, child, I'll never control your choice'.

**153.** Careful comment on May linked to situation of Kate (AO4)

**154.** Well-informed discussion of the love triangle in relation to status (AO3, AO1)



But social status still works as an active enemy to happiness as long as Marlow is unaware of the comic deception played upon him and as long as he cannot come **out of his shell of coyness.**

**The play is a sequence of mistakes and misperceptions. No wonder it 'exhilarated' its audience, as Johnson proclaimed. Much of the humour (a mix of genteel comedy of manners, satire and farce) rests upon social status.<sup>155</sup>**

The governing class does not come out of it entirely without criticism. Hastings and Marlow's superior disdain for Hardcastle, thinking he is an innkeeper, is the appalling snobbery of privileged young men. Marlow is presented as the classic English upper class male: educated at secondary and tertiary level in an entirely male environment and thus awkward and unsocialised among articulate women of his own rank, though brashly talkative and rudely suggestive in contact with lower class females. In talking of him, Mr Hardcastle says he 'has been bred a scholar, and is designed for an employment in the service of his country', possibly the civil service (a lucrative sinecure refuge for gentry sons). The negative side of Marlow's development is that in being easily conversible with the lower class female he simultaneously despises them.

**Rank and social status are always linked with other related themes. In *She Stoops to Conquer* there is the long-standing town versus country conflict, where denizens of London are thought to be more sophisticated and fashionable than country-dwelling bumpkins (or Lumpkins). Even town servants thought themselves better bred and more knowing than their rural counterparts. We see this in the opening scene of Sheridan's *The Rivals* and in Goldsmith in Mr Hardcastle's unsuccessful attempts to train his servants how to behave when present at a dinner where there are elegant guests.<sup>156</sup>**

**Goldsmith's drama pivots on two love situations. One, that is agreed upon by the fathers, looks doomed to failure between the two young people, largely through Marlow's incapacity to speak naturally and normally with females of his own class. It is his personality and education that are an enemy to his happiness. In the other situation love is readily admitted by the two young people, but hampered by Miss Neville's poverty – unless she can liberate her jewellery – and Mrs Hardcastle's determination to marry her off to her son. By contrast, in Chaucer the drama rests on rather different foundations: whether an inappropriate marriage between senex and juvenis, highjacked by an affair between the young wife and the old man's squire will lead to resolution or dissolution.<sup>157</sup>**

The Chaucer narrative is situated firmly in a world where the values are strict and transgression is clearly frowned upon and expected to be punished. Goldsmith's genial 'laughing' comedy is gentler and merely pokes fun at human foolishness and its ready gullibility.

Examiner commentary

This top band answer makes a very detailed, forcefully argued case. The Chaucer has been seen as more productive (in the light of the prompt quotation) as a text, but the comparison is balanced, thoughtful, and very well illustrated (AO4, AO5). The conclusion is established with confidence and clarity, and the evocation of the social world of each text is highly successful and convincing (AO1, AO3).

**155.** Clear reference to contemporary critical opinion; neatly defines Goldsmith's milder satirical methods (AO5, AO3)

**156** Careful unpicking of town/country satire, with more contextual detail (AO3, AO5)

**157** Conclusion neatly and precisely establishes similarities and differences between texts in light of the question's prompt. (AO4, AO1)



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