

# A LEVEL

## ENGLISH LITERATURE H071 H471

### Exemplar Candidate Answers

Unit F663 Shakespeare and  
Drama and Poetry Pre 1800



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# INTRODUCTION

OCR has reproduced these exemplar candidate answers to support teachers in interpreting the assessment criteria for the GCE English Literature specification.

These exemplars should be read in conjunction with the June 2012 question paper and marks scheme for unit F663: Drama and Poetry Pre 1800, and the OCR Report to Centres for unit F663 from the June 2012 exam series, also available on the OCR website.

This content has been selected by senior OCR examiners, to illustrate how the assessment criteria are applied, and to provide some commentary on what factors contributed to an overall grading. The exemplar candidate answers are intended to demonstrate a range of achievement, and exemplify work in Bands 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Assessment Criteria, supported by an examiner commentary.

As grade boundaries are subject to change from series to series, these responses have not been graded and are instead banded to give an indication of the level of each response.

While the exemplars are intended to be useful in interpreting the specification's Assessment Objectives, they should in no way be regarded as definitive answers.

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# Exemplar 1 BAND 6

## SHAKESPEARE *OTHELLO*

'For a hero, Othello is too easy to pity, too hard to like.'

By considering the dramatic presentation of Othello, evaluate this view.

[30]

### ANSWER

AO1 Detailed understanding of question

AO2 Detailed look at effects

AO2 Dynamics

AO3 View

AO1 Awkward

AO3 View

AO1 Both sophisticated and awkward

AO2 Genre/theory

AO3/4 Sense of audience

AO4 Context is good

This question would acknowledge that Othello is a hero, but with this aspect comes negatives of his character suggesting that is easy to pity, (thus denoting his sensitivity in the play) and asserting that he is not a likeable character (due to his transgressions). The dramatic presentation of Othello is seen clearly in the first act: he is not introduced to us by his name; either 'Othello' or 'General', instead we hear of him in conversation in the night between Iago, Roderigo and Brabantio. Othello is categorised as 'lascivious moor' 'thick lips' 'Barbary horse' these negative terms employed by Iago do provoke pity as to the effects of how we see Othello. The Othello we see in the following scenes is referred to as 'valiant' 'noble' 'General' and has been praised for his service of the state. The contrasts of Iago's generalisations and Othello's true nature, make it easy to pity Othello due to the isolated way in which he is portrayed. Critics have accused Iago of having 'a barnyard view of the world' and this he connects to the character Othello.

To analyse if Othello is 'too hard to like' would possibly suggest that he does not contain any good qualities as such. I would disagree, Othello is introduced as a noble valiant man, who amidst threats can uphold peace 'put up your bright swords or the dew will rust them'. Already we see the romantic tragic hero which A C Bradley speaks of, one of the most romantic throughout all of Shakespeare's plays. Othello is respected by the men he works with when he's around and is presented in a loving nature to his wife as well 'Sweet Desdemona': the way in which Shakespeare juxtaposes this notion of Othello to the one we see emerging in act 3 scene 3 is quite disturbing. Othello becomes his own antithesis and lives up to his stereotype of changing wills to which Iago generalises him.

Nonetheless Othello fits into Aristotle's definition of the tragic hero, who started off with qualities which are good. Then sooner influenced by internal and external influences against him not only are we presented with a tragic hero but one who also has a flaw. Jacobean audiences would have been used to the tragic flaw notable in the characters in the theatre. This flaw teaches the 'uncertainty of the world' and sometimes the hero contains more than one flaw in contrast to Greek tragedy to which Aristotle was defining.

AO2 Effects

The pity of Othello's race shows that his actions may have been somewhat inevitable by fate and this can be confirmed with his constant swearing to the 'stars' and 'heaven' giving a deeper sense to the mystery of this outsider character. Emma Smith notes that 'Othello is nothing more than a racist play'. I would disagree: the issue that is most important in terms of race is the fact that Othello loses his identity - Jacobean audiences were not too much concerned by Othello's race (for example white men playing the role of the black character) but look instead at the isolation, at how a noble character can 'turn Turk'.

AO1 Confident argument

It could be argued that the fellow represents the Turkish fleet, they were generalised as 'savages' 'woman beaters' and 'barbarians', and this is clear in the play The Ottoman. These similarities make it harder to see Othello as a 'credulous fool' and instead more like a murderer, whose language begins to show no pity 'I'll tear her to pieces' demonstrating the savage, bestial imagery that Iago links to Othello.

AO4 Alert to literary context

Apt AO2

AO1 Develops

In Act 3 Scene 3, the temptation scene, we see how Iago wishes to stir up hatred and jealousy - 'green eyed monster' - within Othello. Iago's 'malignant' nature makes it harder to hate Othello because it may seem that these events are inevitable, Othello is unaware of the plotting of Iago 'I serve the Moor to serve my turn upon him' showing through his soliloquies the way Iago wishes to wreck the 'harmony' within the play and turn. Turning is a key image in the play and Iago regularly uses it to stir up 'hatred' - 'I will turn her pitch into black'. This dramatic presentation of a romantic character, contrasted with one who becomes a 'Barbary horse' makes us question what is the true nature of Othello. A criticism is that as the play proceeds answers are beginning to be dismissed and more questions begin to be asked 'Is't possible? Is't true?'.

AO2 Interesting

AO3 Response of audience

AO2 Apt detail

Nevertheless, Othello cannot be taken away from the sin he commits by the 'guiltless' murder of Desdemona. Othello swears 'my life upon her faith' and in the next few scenes we follow a misogynistic man who exclaims 'villainous whore'. The pathos attached to Desdemona in Act 4 shows how a man easily swayed to hatred and false realities can kill one so innocent. In the 2007 Globe production we see Othello coming out in Moslem clothing showing how he has turned to be the enemy of state, no longer a Christian but killing the chaste Christian martyr 'Desdemona'. The imagery of light is distinguished when Othello says 'put out the light', hope is gone for Othello and Desdemona.

Apt AO3 Dramatic reference

AO2 Detail

Many modern productions are nevertheless concerned with Othello's psyche and his 'tormented soul'. This hell-like imagery shows the grim ending for Othello. 'Whip me ye devils': he has his own self recognition and fit in the idea of him being a tragic hero by encountering what he has done wrong. But Othello talks about 'a pain upon my forehead' this pain could symbolise cuckold horns but also how Othello's thought becomes invaded by cruel motiveless plots of Iago. Oliver Parker's (1995) Othello shows Othello attacking Iago, his thoughts are not safe, strikingly shown by the beach setting making him more vulnerable. "Villain! Be sure thou prove my love a whore' - he wants ocular proof. This could easily show how Othello is easy to pity - he doesn't realise the ways in which he is making Iago, the 'moral pyromaniac's' life easier - all Iago now has to do, is show him a false truth and he will believe it



Instead of loving Desdemona, he bonds himself to the Devil (Iago) 'I am bound to thee forever'. Iago is always in control 'do not rise yet' and can be seen to lead Othello into this 'hollow hell' It cannot be disputed part of the reason why Othello is easy to pity and also hard to like is because he doesn't see 'honest Iago' for what he is. Emilia is able to establish 'he lies to the heart' but this realisation is way too late to change anything. Iago 'hates the Moor' but Othello is oblivious to this.

AO1 Clearly developing

In Act 5, Othello realises the errors he has made, but can we really know that he's generally 'noble' and regretful. "I have done the state some service and they know it" Othello is more concerned with his action to the state rather than his murder of Desdemona. Audiences have often been known to scream and shout, showing the way which Othello's character becomes hard to like. His hubris never fails to leave him. He defines himself as 'one who loved not wisely but too well'. Othello believed that he loved too well his final speech is mixed with exotic links and he trails away from his reality. The only character who seems to pity Othello is Desdemona, she has been described at the start of the play to pity the dangers of fellow had passed: Othello loves the pity it takes him off the hook. In my view Othello wants to be seen as 'easy to pity' because it takes away his moral responsibility. As with most Jacobean at the time Othello is concerned with his reputation 'behold Othello's reputation's gone' (he's too concerned with the way in which he is viewed by others). Shakespeare's dramatic presentation Othello is due to the stark contrast we see even from the start. The constant contradictions we see in his nature pose a negative threat. Othello's isolation can be due to many factors and he's not 'valiant' throughout. This is what makes it such a dramatic tragedy 'the tragic loading of this bed' - Othello is defined by his status, and by entering a domestic setting, he cannot apply these skills into a married life. The character of Othello has a growing sense of nihilism, nothing becomes left of him: just like Brabantio, he is 'robbed'.

AO2 Clear focus on ending

AO1 Sophisticated point

Sophisticated analysis

**Band: 6**      **Mark: 28**

An engaged and alert exploration of the proposition - detailed and lively support but at times AO1 is awkward. The answer grapples intelligently with real aspects of language and dramatic effect, approaching real sophistication in its conclusion.

# Exemplar1 BAND 6

## Drama and Poetry pre-1800 WEBSTER AND DONNE

'The skull lies only a little way beneath the skin.'

In the light of this view, consider ways in which writers explore the awareness of death. In your answer, compare one drama text and one poetry text from the lists above.

[30]

### ANSWER

AO1 Splendid opening, if awkward  
AO1

Apt AO2

AO3 Link

AO2 Concise summary of range of poems  
AO3 Very intertextual

AO2 Engaged

T S Elliot famously stated that 'Webster saw the skull beneath the skin, and Donne such another'. This would contradict the latter quote and suggest that John Webster and Donne both note the importance and awareness of death at the time. In the Jacobean era, death was a common reality, women often died in childbirth, the plague etc. There is a constant realisation of death always being there.

In the Duchess of Malfi the awareness of death is introduced to us in the first couple of lines when Antonio speaks of the corruption of the court 'death and disease through the whole land spread': already we are dealing with a society which is taken over by death. This also links to the corruption of the court, linking to characters such as the Cardinal and Ferdinand. Death approaches the characters in the play in various circumstances and Act 5 is mainly concerned with death and conscience. The realisation of death can be linked to the speaker in Donne's poetry, his ideas of death undergo a change. At first it may seem that 'the skull lies a little way beneath' with lines such as 'death, thou shalt die': the speaker believes 'rest' is all that there is in 'Death be not Proud'. Donne shows a combat of death, and the speaker believes that he and his lover can 'transcend' death. The speaker's sense of hope that 'none shall die' in Good Morrow shows his sense of certainty. This is soon contradicted with doubt soon after, the speaker describes having 'a sin of fear' in Nocturnal upon Saint Lucy - the idea of fear relates to Death. Jacobean audiences would have known that fear of an afterlife was a great sin. Religion gave hope of a certainty beyond death, a hope of an 'eternal church' which the Duchess speaks of. Yet characters are uncertain about death and what will happen. Julia's last lines are 'I go I know not whither'. The overall sense of confusion about death is clearly explored in both texts.

However, like Donne's speaker, Webster's characterisation of the Duchess is aware of death and approaches it without fear (stoicism). Shortly after the marriage scene she realises she is heading into a 'wilderness', the sense of awareness of what will face her. Even though she begins to question if her and Cariola will know each other in the next world, she still realises she will enter 'heaven's gates' and also on her 'knees'. The reason why the Duchess is such a rejoiced character, is due to her triumph over death in contrast to her murderers. The Duchess and Antonio represent a love that transcends death, and is not, as the Cardinal describes it, 'an entry into some kind of prison'. The



neo-platonic nature of Antonio and the Duchess represents lovers aware of an eternal glory, like Donne 'if not fit for tombs' then 'in sonnets' shall their love be remembered. We are presented with a couple 'canonised by love' - Canonisation.

AO1 Sophisticated concept well discussed

Antonio's eulogy shows how he idolises the Duchess 'she stains time past, and lights the time to come': in modern productions the Duchess is presented as a Christ-like figure, even in sacrifice. In the 2012 Old Vic production, the Duchess is associated with light and often lights up the set. She seems triumphant throughout and lives again in the echo scene. In a way, it could be read that the skull is only a little way beneath the skin: 'it is but a rest' and Donne's speaker comments on their 'waking soul' - Valediction Forbidding Mourning - there is an overall sense of hope. Even the lovers are not restricted by the time 'nor hours, days, months'. In 'Relic' their love lives on.

AO3 Performance

AO1 Clear view

It could be argued that neo-platonic ideals are the only way to achieve a release from death. The characters who face a bitter awareness of death are those who are corrupt. For example, in Act 5 we see Ferdinand tormented by death, when seeing the Duchess's body 'his eyes dazzle' - it's too much for him. This madness after leads him into a crazed imagination of false realities (believing he is a wolf). Richard Burbage who plays the role of Othello and Ferdinand (King's Men) would have exhibited the same harsh imagery that both characters have: both damned by their sin and leading them to what Bosola describes as 'a kind of nothing' - the tip of a triangle. Ferdinand's ruthless nature 'to feed a fire as great as my revenge' shows the way in which revenge tragedy was highly concerned with death. Sir Francis Bacon described revenge as 'a kind of wild justice' in which those seeking revenge all die! Links to 'The Apparition' 'O murderesse, I am dead'. None of the avengers have a sense of a life after death. Like the Cardinal, the bad are haunted by death and and the damning they will expect 'I see a thing armed with a rake'.

AO1 Argument develops

AO4 Context (also AO3)

[The] Cardinal, the religious figure in the play, even displays a confusion about death. This internalised guilt shows in Act 5, when he engages in his first theological debate 'I am puzzled in a question about hell'. His unawareness and uncertainty would have been viewed as a sin at the time. Even so Ferdinand wishes to bring 'despair' on the Duchess, but doesn't succeed. The Cardinal becomes warped with fear and his dying word shows his bitter self-realisation when he doesn't want to be remembered. This anti-Catholicism would have been favoured in a period when the Protestants ruled and the Papacy presented a corrupt state of affairs. 13 The speaker in 'Batter my Heart' can be linked to the character of the Cardinal: 'betroth'd to the Enemy' - he has married sin and with that comes the guilt and weariness - he wants to be forgiven.

AO1 continued development

Apt AO4 context

Meanwhile Webster presents the corruption of the court: Donne presents the corruption of love and has been called at times nothing other than a misogynist. The speaker's link to female's and death is key. In 'Love's Alchemy', women 'sweet and wit at best, but mummy's possessed'. This negative view on women reflects Bosola's answer to the Duchess 'thou are a box of wormseed, .... a green salvatory mummy'. Women were closely linked with death and emptiness. Once the Duchess loses her good name, she is nothing. Ferdinand continues to 'damn that body of hers'. Rupert Brooke has generalised the 'Duchess of Malfi' as a play of 'maggot', symbolising the eaten flesh, the death that haunts the character.

AO3 Comparison

Apt AO2/AO3

AO1 strongly argued, and AO3

However, the Duchess triumphs over misogynistic claims, and represents a strong character not scared to die; 'whether I am doomed to live or die, I can do both like a prince', when saying this to Ferdinand in Act 3. This shows Webster as a 'protofeminist' according to Luckyj, a character defining herself as prince displaying her strong (masculine) nature. The Duchess is aware of her fate but still stands strong - those otherwise should be 'pitied rather than feared'.

AO2 Sophisticated

By Webster removing the protagonist a scene earlier, it comically contrasts with the all male affair displaying 'havoc' of men who have no control. The malcontent Bosola bitterly remarks 'O this gloomy world, womanish and fearful doth mankind live'. Men are becoming women, [showing] a weakness which the Duchess doesn't display. The use of metadrama takes away from the awareness of the cruelty we see, in death. 'I have often seen it in a play' and when the Duchess accounts this world 'nothing but a tedious theatre'. Contrasting this with the horror 'I will boil her bastards into cullis'. This horror would have been favoured more so in World War 2 after Nazi tortures: audiences were much more aware of death and a growing popularity of the play returned.

AO3/4 Audience response

Both writers display an awareness of death internally and externally showing how the skull can lie deep beneath the skin. The comic way in which the men die in Act 5 symbolises the detachment from neoplatonic love which Donne's speaker swears by, equal in love through it 'both sexes fit' and also triumphant in death through it 'canonised by love'. Characters such as Ferdinand and the Cardinal would be an example of those who 'beg' a 'pattern' of their love. The brother in the play will never find peace and hope of an 'Eternal Church'. Despite bitter realisations of death, in both Donne and Webster we still see a positive representation of Death. In 'Hymne to God the Father', Donne speaks of having 'more', a pun which can relate to always having Anne (his wife) in his heart, which thus makes him 'fear no more'.

**Band: 6**      **Mark: 30**

Remarkably wide-ranging and well-referenced answer, with much excellent detailed comparative analysis. Some compression of expression can hamper clarity, but strong sense of verbal and dramatic impact, and a dynamic argument.

**General comment:**

**Consistently detailed and well informed, responding with sophistication to the question – Shakespeare answer is engaged and alert, and Section B is full of originality, contextual awareness, and constant comparison. AO1 flaws do not seriously impede communication at high level.**

## Exemplar 2 BAND 6

### SHAKESPEARE *OTHELLO*

'For a hero, Othello is too easy to pity, too hard to like.'

By considering the dramatic presentation of Othello, evaluate this view.

[30]

## ANSWER

AO1/3 Detailed understanding of question and effect and critical position

AO2 Detailed look at evidence

AO3 Incorporated into argument

AO4 Precise focus on terms: sense of audience

Othello is a tragic hero and as Aristotle stated must possess a fatal character flaw or 'hamartia'. In the play this fatal flaw is Othello's susceptibility to manipulation coupled with his immense jealousy. There has been much debate over Othello as a character and A. C. Bradley believes that Othello 'inspires a passion of mingled love and pity' and towards the end of the audience feels 'love and admiration' for him. This view is rejected by many though and Leavis believes that the protagonist's character was tested by marriage and 'deteriorated and shows itself unfit'. Critics such as Leavis seem to suggest an inevitability to Othello's demise and that his fatal flaw would always cause his downfall. Referring back to the quotation in question, 'for a hero Othello is too easy to pity to hard to like', it is evident that some critics would disagree with this with Bradley taking the stance that Othello is too easy to like while Leavis would believe that he is too hard to pity.

Othello shows throughout the play a lack of self-knowledge demonstrating another flaw in his character. Towards the start, he declares he is not prey to sexual passion, 'to comply with heat the young effects, in my distinct and proper satisfaction' that as the events on the plate unfold, it is clear that Othello does not know himself as well as he presumed and a military and domestic conflict arises. His military role and position as general become mixed into his love life with devastating consequences. He calls his wife 'O my fair warrior' and when questioning Desdemona's fidelity he seeks for 'ocular proof' again showing his soldierly mindset, through military terms and military-like decisions. As Brown states in the military role 'he is self assured and secure' but as this role begins to dominate his marriage, it begins to destroy what Othello loves. In a sense the flaw of lack of self-knowledge makes it easier to pity Othello as it is a trust that many members of the audience could relate to, and since Othello appears to be a character who although considered 'valiant' and 'noble' as a war general, is also destined to deteriorate as the overwhelming number of flaws contribute to the tragedy. It is easy to pity Othello because of these flaws but it is difficult to argue that they make him a character that is 'too' easy to pity.

Othello is manipulated by Iago, his ensign, but there is again debate over his impact as Warren believes that he is 'pushed towards tragedy by a ruthless demi-devil' whereas Leavis holds the view that Iago's role is 'subordinate'. Iago is a contrast to Othello as he is a Renaissance man who is far more secure about himself. The line 'tis in ourselves

that we are thus or thus' shows his pragmatism as he implies that he is a man who works only for himself and this is demonstrated as he shares his devious plan with no-one including his own wife Emelia. As Hazlitt argues, he is 'an amoral artist who seeks to fashion a world in his own image' again showing his role as a typical Renaissance man. Iago's role is not 'subordinate' and he slowly poisons Othello's mind through his persuasive techniques such as never confirming any of his beliefs and allowing Othello to paint a picture for himself, 'Utter my thoughts! Why, say they are vile and false?' Iago uses Othello's own flaws to his advantage and by capitalising on Othello's noble nature, he can contribute heavily to his downfall. It is difficult to pinpoint Iago's exact motives and this actually increases the pity of Othello as he is manipulated by such an evil individual who, as Coleridge suggests, acted upon 'motiveless malignity'.

AO1 Succinct analysis

As Iago manipulates Othello, the protagonist's language changes as a result of the typical stage Machiavel's presence. At the beginning of the play, Othello speaks in blank measured verse highlighting his nobility and heroism. In the Northern Broadsides Theatre Company's radio version of Othello, Othello (played by Lenny Henry) remains calm and collected during the opening scene while Brabantio appears in a panic in contrast. Wilson-Knight believes Othello's speech demonstrates a unique soldierly precision' and refers to it as the 'Othello music'. This is demonstrated in lines like 'keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them' where his military language combines with naturalistic language, makes him appear extremely powerful and in control. However the 'Othello music' is destroyed as Iago manipulates Othello and at this stage Othello's syntax breaks down and becomes fragmented, "Pish! Noses, ears and lips, is't possible? Confess?" His questioning here shows how he has lost his control while the contorted lines reflect how Othello is disintegrating as a character. Again, the language change makes it easy to pity the tragic hero as he falls from his noble position.

AO3 Very clear AO2 with performance references

AO1 pulls back to main focus

While Othello is easy to pity, it is also possible to view him in a different light and his treatment of Desdemona can make him too hard to like as a character. His readiness to believe the 'honest' Iago leads him to act very decisively and quickly come to the conclusion of murdering his wife, 'she must die, else she'd betray more men'. It can be argued that Desdemona is too passive and her willingness to accept death and blame is simply on her 'wretched fortune' is the flaws of herself, however Othello certainly does not treat the situation with the caution that he should. In this sense Othello is arguably 'too hard to like'.

AO1 All terms of the question addressed

Othello is a flawed character and there is a certain inevitability to his downfall because of this. These flaws coupled with Iago's devastating role make Othello a character easy to pity but his actions which are very military orientated, prove to make him a hero that is difficult to like. In the final scene, following the murder of his wife, Othello is revealed the truth and (?) of Desdemona's innocence. The taking of his own life at this point reaffirms his honour and it could be argued that this makes him a character to pity, however as one critic states, 'he is thinking only of himself' at this point and while reputation was an integral part of Jacobean life, to a modern audience this could appear selfish but a fitting end to the play.

AO1 Slight sense of rush in conclusion?

**Band: 6**

**Mark: 27**

Coherently framed argument using established critics quite unusually, though perhaps a little light on AO2 detail. Fully explores terms of question.

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## Exemplar 2 BAND 6

### Drama and Poetry pre-1800 *MARLOWE AND MILTON*

'People will do anything, no matter how foolish, to get what they want.'

In the light of this view, discuss ways in which writers represent ambition. In your answer, compare one drama text and one poetry text from the lists above.

[30]

## ANSWER

AO1 Broad but comprehensive opening: establishes clear position

Both protagonists of *Paradise Lost* and *Dr Faustus* show overwhelming ambition and for the pair, it eventually leads to their downfall. As Aristotle states, ambition is their 'hamartia' and both Faustus and Satan attempt to overcome the 'Great Chain of Being' which is a hierarchical structure of life. Faustus and Satan wish to better their position; Faustus wishes to 'use his brains to gain a deity' and Satan also wishes to gain a God-like status. Both characters are 'foolish' in attempting to receive their desires; Faustus sells his soul to the devil while Satan believes he can overthrow God, 'the monarch in heaven'.

AO2/AO3 Clear evidence, and critical support

Faustus and Satan share an ambition for power. Faustus recognises that 'Emperors and Kings are but obeyed in their several provinces' realising that they have limits and an 'end' and wishes to gain more power than the likes of them. Similarly, Satan also desires power and the line 'Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven' demonstrates this as he places more importance on power over morality. As Williams states 'Satan is a convincing portrait of pride, ambition and envy' and his envy of God's position and his 'foolish' decision to attempt to overcome this leads to his eventual downfall.

AO2 Good on tone and use of support/  
AO3 religious context

The ambition of Faustus and Satan is similar in the sense that they both want power, status and wealth, however Faustus' ambition appears more superficial while Satan's ambition is more destructive. Faustus wishes to 'ransack the ocean for orient pearl' and to 'fly to India for gold' and as Brunskill stated Faustus' 'ambition is trivial and superficial'. In comparison, Satan appears more evil in his intentions and states, 'If God's providence out of our evil seek to bring forth good, our labour must be to pervert that end' and as Thompson states 'evil always begets evil, it must eventually effect its own destruction' showing how Satan's overambition and evil motives lead to his downfall. Hodges also believes that Satan possesses a 'destructive egoism and ambition' which parallels to Faustus' ambition which is far more shallow and when given his powers, Faustus' actions are as superficial as his ambition as he humiliates the Pope 'Are you crossing yourself?...use that trick no more, I would advise you' which Marlowe used as an attack on Catholicism through satire. The line 'his waxen wings did mount above his reach' in *Doctor Faustus* compares Faustus to the Icarus of Greek mythology who ignored warnings not to fly too close to the sun and fell to his death as a result. This image shows Faustus' overwhelming ambition and also his foolishness

AO3 Developed and interesting comparison

in his desires. The image also compares to Williams' view that Satan 'set his throne higher than God's' as both images suggest foolish ambition and unachievable aims. These images gain link to the 'Great chain of Being' as the protagonists attempt to 'beat the system' and achieve a higher status.

AO4 Sense of genre (Everyman)

While the quest for power and status remain the characters' main priority, Faustus also maintains his ambition for knowledge and his listing of various objects and ideas that he wishes to further his knowledge on emphasises his ambition for omniscience. 'Spells and incantations.....motions and dispositions...plants, herbs and trees'. His knowledge and intellect fuel his ambition for power and in this sense he is a Renaissance man who simply wishes to help himself. Despite this, many have also compared this to the 'Everyday Man' of the Morality plays since he represents any average man with the simple ambition to better himself. As Taine states 'he is a genuine man, hot-headed, fiery, a slave to his passions'. In this sense, Faustus seems a character to pity but as Roma Gill expresses, 'Mephistopheles gives him all the facts... he can now make no appeal on grounds of ignorance.' His ambition appears more foolish because of his intellect and extensive knowledge whereas Satan appears to simply have an evil core.

AO3 Sustained and interesting comparison

Faustus and Satan share ambitions but ultimately for different motives and while both [are] foolish in their attempts to achieve their aims, their intentions make it easier or harder to relate to them. Because Faustus does share some qualities of the 'Everyman' figure he becomes easier to relate to as his ambitions appear only human and while superficial and greedy he simply shows the 'eagerness of curiosity' as Price states. Satan on the other hand, is much more difficult to relate to because of his evil intentions and his desire for destruction. Thompson argues that he shows 'a tremendous force of personality and aggressive will' and in this respect he appears more evil. Both are foolish and do not stop at anything in an attempt to achieve their aims, but it is easier to relate to Faustus than it is to Satan.

**Band: 6**

**Mark: 27**

Explores texts in ingenious way by cross-reference and contextual reference, especially on Marlowe – detailed exploration of question. AO4 is rather light, but there is indication of secure cultural understanding.



## Exemplar 3 BAND 5

### SHAKESPEARE *OTHELLO*

'For a hero, Othello is too easy to pity, too hard to like.'

By considering the dramatic presentation of Othello, evaluate this view.

[30]

### ANSWER (SECTION 3: PROSE)

AO1 Direct, purposeful opening

The protagonist of 'Othello' is undoubtedly Othello, as the title suggests, however as a hero of a revenge tragedy he has a 'fatal flaw' that creates his downfall. In some ways we do pity him because of his kind and loving nature: notably towards Desdemona, and therefore his death can be viewed as extremely tragic instead of being seen as a grand and noble act as can be expected from a 'hero'.

AO1 Beginning? (Not first impression) Useful AO2

From the beginning of the play Shakespeare uses dramatic presentation effectively for the character of Othello, we see him become self-effacing to appear disarming to the Venetian Court. 'Most potent, grave and reverend signors', we have massive respect for him after this as we see him act calmly in the face of racism; he attempts to out-tongue the court which he manages to do with ease. We also see his affectionate side as he announces 'I love the gentle Desdemona' and when she is able to confirm this it is evident that he has a soft nature that is all too easy to like.

AO2 Rather compressed: some relevant AO4

Furthermore as the play progresses we do pity Othello in how he breaks down, Iago acts on Othello's harmatia which in this case is jealousy. Iago turns jealousy itself into a monster 'O Lord of jealousy beware, it is the green eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on' and uses this to poison Othello. Although he does not confront his wife, he does demand 'ocular proof' and once Iago creates the handkerchief plot [it] is enough to send him mad 'handkerchief - confessions - handkerchief' and results in a fit of jealousy. This is also deriving from the fact that he is black and therefore an outsider which plays on his own insecurities within him as to whether Desdemona is actually beginning to doubt their marriage. 'Haply for I am black'. An Elizabethan audience at the time would certainly have picked up on such matters; although London was not a multicultural society at this time, there were enough black people to create a certain degree of racism and often inter-racial marriages were frowned upon.

Additionally it is easy to pity Othello as he begins to use Iago's language, clearly not knowing himself well enough. 'O curse of marriage! That we can call these delicate creatures ours and not their appetites' this can appear misogynous especially as it seems he is referring to his wife as a possession: however to Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences this would not have caused a stir because women were of little status

in society and were expected to show devotion to their fathers before showing devotion to their husbands. This is highlighted in Desdemona's comment 'I see here a divided duty which suggests how she wants to remain loyal to both Brabantio and Othello. Othello's I believe shows that he in some ways takes comfort in the fact he belongs to a certain group of men who are married and have been cuckolded. He does not feel alone and knows that this happens to others. This makes us pity Othello as he tries desperately to comfort himself.

However it is also true that in many other ways Othello is not to be pitied or liked and it is his own fault that he is undone. As F R Leavis states 'Othello is too stupid to be regarded as a tragic hero,' which is true in that he does not talk to his wife and trusts the malcontent in the form of Iago. It can be argued that Othello is not a 'hero' at all because of his fatal flaw of jealousy. Desdemona stays loyal to Othello until the end but but reciprocation cannot be seen in Othello's actions. He becomes increasingly violent 'I'll tear her all to pieces' and asks Iago 'how shall I murder him?' when he believes it is Cassio who has slept with Desdemona. This is not a trait to be admired in Othello, without confronting anybody he has turned to revenge.

As Wilson Knight suggests 'Othello loves emotion for its own sake, luxuriates in it' and I believe this to be true as it is all too evident that his emotions take over him. This leads to his downfall and his realisation 'Othello's occupation's gone', it is significant to note that he makes use of third person here almost as if he is no longer Othello but has been taken over by another being. This could be Iago, or the monster of jealousy itself. Othello is continually undermined by Iago who states that 'Trifles light as air are to the jealous confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ' which further reinforces the idea that Othello is not to be pitied as his own jealousy is what leads to his eventual death. Jealousy was seen as an ignoble trait in Elizabethan times and therefore the audience would not have pitied Othello either seeing that this was the main reason for his downfall.

A hero should be characterised by strength but some may argue that no such strength is evident in Othello. He states 'I had rather be a toad and live on the vapour of a dungeon' which not only shows him using Iago's language but also highlights how weak he is and how he cannot bear to suffer. This is further shown in his own death: when Emilia reveals ([he] who he believed was 'honest') Iago's true motive he cannot stand to live any more and kills himself in a climatical ending, which can be argued befitted a hero.

In conclusion I believe that although Othello did show a fatal flaw he is to be pitied and liked due to his strength and bravery that was all too evident at the beginning. However this feeling of pity becomes stronger as Iago manipulates Othello and therefore proves that he is not a true hero, because instead of rising up over Iago he allows himself to be treated like a puppet on a string; murdering the only woman he had ever truly loved and then killing himself in remorse. Therefore it is true that Othello is too easy to pity and too hard to like to be a true Shakespearean 'hero'.

AO2 Useful tracking of reactions

AO3 Critical support

AO1 Still tracing response: some AO4

AO1 - Light on theory of heroism

AO1 - Clear, direct conclusion

Band: 5

Mark: 24

Good, direct, thorough – keeps question in focus. Secure AO2/3

## Exemplar 3 BAND 5

### DRAMA AND POETRY PRE-1800 WEBSTER AND DONNE

'Strong emotions demand intense and vivid expression.'

In the light of this view, consider the uses which writers make of passionate language. In your answer, compare one drama text and one poetry text from the lists above.

[30]

## ANSWER

Passionate language is often derived from the feeling of love, and the intensity of emotions that this brings. In the 'Duchess of Malfi' by John Webster and poetry by John Donne both explore this type of language to portray how people need to express vividly their emotions.

It is true to say that both Webster and Donne are metaphysical writers, drawing on outer worldly details to create imagery. In 'The Duchess of Malfi' this is all too clearly shown through the love of the Duchess and Antonio. She uses gentle persuasion to woo Antonio 'this goodly roof of yours is too low built, raise yourself' and believes that 'we are forced to woo because none dare woo us.' It is evident that they share strong emotions for each other and do love each other. Passionate language is voiced by Antonio 'and may our sweet affections, like the spheres, be still in motion'. This links to the idea that a sphere is a perfect shape, and during the Renaissance it was believed that heaven was where the planets were, all of which are spheres and therefore the shape links to heavenly aspirations.

This can also be linked to Donne's poem 'The Sun Rising' that similarly uses the language of the spheres 'this bed thy sphere'. However this differs from Webster's idea as it reinforces how the speaker believes their love is superior to all others and so when they are in bed together it is as if the whole world is there with them. Donne particularly focuses on the neo-platonic conception of love; that physical love and religious love are derived from the same impulses, believing that separation, therefore, is not a problem for the couple as their relationship does not rely on physical presence.

The same idea is echoed throughout Webster's play, when the couple are separated Antonio attempts to comfort the duchess 'heaven hath a hand in it...some curious artist who takes in sunder a clock or watch when it is out of frame, to bring't to better order.' This vivid expression works as a conceit, that their love will be proved in their separation and they will grow stronger. Donne also uses conceits in his poetry and in 'A Valediction Forbidding Mourning' similarly uses a conceit, but instead of a compass. 'Like two stiff legs of a compass, to move but doth, if th'other do.' However

AO2 Some sense of language effects, though 'metaphysical' is not really unpicked

AO3 Deft link

AO2/3 Useful detailed focus on poem and language

AO3/2 Useful comparisons and explanation of conceit

it draws on the same idea that the separation will lead to the relationship growing stronger. As Antonio states 'man, like to cassia, is proved best being bruised' and this language highlights how although both will suffer, it will eventually show their noble side when they are able to rise above the suffering.

However, this is not always the case, as the Duchess states 'Must I like a slave born to Russia suffer tyranny', she does not want to suffer and despite Antonio's words finds little comfort in them. Donne also shows this in his poem 'A Nocturnal upon St Lucy's Day' where he states that when apart the lovers are 'a quintessence even from nothingness'. The speaker becomes the more distilled form of nothing when he is without his lover. The intense language shows how strong the emotions are of the individuals that they cannot stand to be apart.

AO3 Developed and interesting comparison with critical support

Conversely 'strong emotions' also take the form of incestual and misogynistic feelings and again passionate language is used to highlight this. Ferdinand has an incestuous love for his sister and therefore cannot stand her having children with someone else 'root up her goodly forest, blast her meads'. He shows fiery passion that is so strong it even startles his cold brother, the Cardinal. Misogyny is shown through the character of Bosola 'her scurvy face physic' and can be compared to that shown in Donne's poem 'The Apparition'. The speaker is haunting his ex-lover and uses language such as 'feigned vestall' to try and torment her. The critic John Stubbs comments that 'at times he (John Donne) could be nothing other than misogynous' and I agree with this criticism fully as on many occasions Donne undermines the woman because of the strong feelings of love that have turned bitter.

AO3 Very useful link

Another example of similar attitudes is in the poem 'Song: Go catch a falling star' by Donne that states 'no-where lives a woman true and fair' and the comment by the Cardinal 'look to the moon and another spacious world, and look to find a constant woman there'. On both occasions the poet and the playwright are being misogynistic and are suggesting that women are not faithful, and both appear passionate about this deduction.

AO4 Rather brisk AO: useful AO3 critical comments

The idea that Ferdinand is such an evil character can be seen as an attack on society at the time; 'The Duchess of Malfi' was written in 1613 when James I ruled England, it is important to note that he was a notoriously sleazy king and society had tired of him and wanted what they perceived to be the good old days of Elizabeth's reign. However the brothers evilness can in some ways be justified, as the critic Stevie Simkin writes 'women's sexuality, once let off the leash, can be seen as potentially catastrophic for social infrastructure'. Windows did not usually re-marry and doing so privately is repugnant and dangerous for the Duchess, and therefore leads to her inevitable death. This death is seen as horrific to a modern day audience, however to the Jacobean death was never far from their own lives, childbirth being the second largest killer after the plague for young women. The play did lose popularity because of its gruesome displays of vivid expression however regained popularity after a famous performance in 1945 after people heard about Nazi death camps, and it became all too easy to relate to a modern day experience.

In conclusion it is clear that passionate language is used by both Webster and Donne effectively to portray intense emotions of both love but also obsession. The strong

emotions are not always a positive aspect, but can in fact be twisted and distorted to become horrific, as shown in the character of Ferdinand and the misogyny evident in the speakers throughout Donne's poetry.

AO1 Straightforward conclusion

**Band: 5 Mark: 23**

Secure knowledge of wide range of poems and references: AO4 reasonably well addressed – sustained focus on language.

**General comment**

**Secure knowledge of texts, direct and thorough – good level of detail.**



# Exemplar 4 BAND 4/5

## SHAKESPEARE *OTHELLO*

'For a hero, Othello is too easy to pity, too hard to like.'

By considering the dramatic presentation of Othello, evaluate this view.

[30]

### ANSWER

AO1 Direct, though not question focused

Othello is a traditional Shakesperean Tragedy. The hero, someone of high power, is brought down to a beastly state. The 'hero' is often brought down by a fatal flaw in their character, known as the hamartia.

AO2 Opening? Some AO2

At the start of the play, Shakespeare presents Othello is very grand, well spoken and eloquent. He addresses a court as "most potent, grave and reverend Signors". This shows us that he knows how to talk to people in high authority. He goes on to say "rude am I in my speech" making it clear to the audience that he knows when hes speaking out of turn. Its this initial, strong presentation of Othello that leads us to believe Othello is a strong and honourable character.

AO2 Turkey? Generalised view

Iago, Othello's 'friend' is the main person responsible for Othello's downfall at the end of the play. Iago digresses that "I hate the Moor, tis thought abroad twixt my sheets , hes done my office." Its the idea that othello has slept with his wife, mixed with other things, that spurs his hatred for Othello and his ambition to see a once noble character come to a degrading end.

Othellos presented as quite a self absorbant character. He manages to relate situations to himself. One criticism of Othello is that he is partly responsible for his own downfall. In Venice we see Othello as a strong, respectable character. It's when he journies out of Venice into Turkey we see a dramatic change in him, heavily influenced by the words of Iago.

Upon hearing his wife Desdemonas safe journey to Turkey, Othello says "If I were now to die, twere to be most happy." This highlights the idea Othello is very over dramatic and grandiose. Its this presentation of him, along with his self absorbance, that makes him harder to like.

AO1 Descriptive, but not entirely clear

Othello talking about Desdemona says "she loved me for the dangers I passed and I loved her that she did pity them." This statement makes us pity Othello, as it seems Desdemona's love for him is based on pity. The reader feels pity for him, but this pity leads to Othello being too hard to like.



AO1 – Sustained response in evidence

When in Turkey, Iago manages to manipulate Othello against his wife and others who care for him. Othello is constantly reminded that he is an outsider, and that he doesn't belong there. One critical reading of Othello says that Othello is "an alien in a white society". Iago says to Othello "In Venice they only show God the pranks they dare not show their husbands". In this line Iago is doing two things. He is suggesting Desdemona is having an affair and sleeping around, but the words 'in Venice' are used to remind Othello he doesn't actually belong there. The reader feels sorry for the way Othello is being manipulated by Iago and this pity stops Othello being a true hero.

AO1 Becoming very narrative, but question still in focus

Othello's built up anger and rage leads him to strike Desdemona. Ludovico says 'it would not be believed in Venice'. This tells us that back in Venice Othello is still regarded very highly and people obviously still respect him. However, in Turkey, Iago's poisonous words "the Moor changes with my poison" have started to affect Othello and cause him to reach his downfall. Othello's fatal flaw is his self-aggrandisement, and it is this that makes him hard to like, and also leads to his downfall.

Othello's life is the battlefield, he talks about 'the tented fields' and 'broil and battle'. When he realises that his career as a soldier is over he exclaims 'Othello's occupations over.' This obsession with himself makes him hard to like and though the audience feels sorry for the way Iago manipulated him, it is hard to like someone who is so arrogant.

AO3 Critical comment: direct, personal conclusion

A critic said "Othello is too stupid to be considered a tragic hero" I would agree with this view point as although the audience feel pity and feel sorry for Othello and the events leading up to his downfall there's no avoiding the fact that it was Othello's arrogance and his self-absorbant nature that allowed Iago to manipulate him in the first place.

**Band: 4**

**Mark: 19**

Straightforward arguments – generally confidently structured.

## Exemplar 4 BAND 4/5

### DRAMA AND POETRY PRE-1800 WEBSTER AND DONNE

'Strong emotions demand intense and vivid expression.'

In the light of this view, consider the uses which writers make of passionate language. In your answer, compare one drama text and one poetry text from the lists above.

[30]

## ANSWER

Strong emotions are a key part in 'The Duchess of Malfi' by John Webster and the poetry of John Donne. Throughout the play and throughout the poems we see different intensities of love and numerous expressions to declare it.

In *The Duchess of Malfi*, the Duchess declares "All discord....circumference". The use of the word circumference could suggest an eternal bond between her and Antonio. This is the threat her two brothers possess. A Jacobean audience at the time would be horrified with the idea of the Duchess marrying someone in a lower class. The idea that the Duchess had power was bad enough, but using it to raise someone into a higher social class was outrageous. Critic Stevie Simkin said "women's sexuality, once let off the leash, was potentially catastrophic for social infrastructure. A Jacobean audience would expect and want the Duchess to die because her position, and how she was choosing to apply it would be catastrophic.

AO2/4 Some useful contextual material, though quotation is cryptic

Antonio says to the Duchess "Our love like the spheres be still in motion." The spheres were planets, which are forever moving. He is suggesting that their love will live forever like the planets this could be compared to "The Sun Rising" in which is said "our bed....centre of the walls thy sphere." This tells us that Donne's speaker is arrogant about his idea of love. He believes that while he's in bed with his lover, everything revolves around them, much like the planets revolve around the sun. This adds extra intensity to love as it focuses on the bedroom and the physical side of a relationship.

AO3 Helpful link, AO2 reasonably unpicked

The Duchess is evidently strongly in love with Antonio and says "our two souls become one." This declaration of love is exclaimed during the wedding scene. The idea of two souls becoming one adds quite powerful imagery and is quite a vivid expression. In comparison, in the poem 'The Flea' Donne's speaker expresses "it sucked from me and now sucks thee, in this flea our two bloods mingled be." This is a, not so romantic, expression adds to the imagery of two lovers becoming one. The idea of blood and souls mixing is quite intense and vivid.

AO2/3 Effective direct comparison

However, love can be expressed intensely in a different way. Ferdinand, the Duchess' brother, loves her in an incestual way. He holds a knife to her exclaiming 'this is my father's poniard.' This is phallic imagery and suggests to the audience he has incestual desires. He also talks about 'bargemen'. This could suggest some homoerotic desires.

AO3/2/4 Direct textual references directly cited. Direct AO4 comments.

AO3 Links are implied here rather than shown in argument

AO2 Direct and rather mechanical explanation

AO1/AO2 Useful examples of strong feeling: no conclusion as such

This could also be counted as a vivid expression. Ferdinand was a loose representation for King James I. Critic Leah Marcus said that the Duchess of Malfi was 'a nostalgia for the reign of Elizabeth I.'

The poem 'The Canonisation' talks about two lovers with a love so strong they will be looked on as saints for their love. Donne's speaker says "Us canonized for love." This shows that the love they have for each other is so pure it will be used as an example for other lovers, this is very passionate language and is a vivid expression. The strong emotions felt by the two demand a sense of intensity and passion.

In the leaving scene in The Duchess of Malfi, Antonio says 'we must part, but heaven hath a hand in it.' This shows us that though they are splitting up and parting ways their love will still be strong. This could be compared to 'Valediction Forbidding Mourning'. Donne's speaker talks about leaving a lover 'though our souls be split in two'. The poem tells the reader that even though the two lovers are parting their love will continue for ever. The quote 'dull sublunary lovers, love' tells us that even after death, the lovers love will still be there. It suggests in heaven the lovers will still love, much like Antonio and the Duchess. The use of commas in "Valediction Forbidding Mourning" helps split up lines and shows the two lovers. Even though separate, they are the same. Antonio compares his love for the Duchess to a 'clock'. You get the image of two clock hands, though apart, they will always be touching. Donne uses this technique as well but talks about love as like a compass. This adds to the passionate language and further romanticises love. A compass always has two connecting parts and when drawing a circle the end will always meet the start. In poetry this idea of talking about something while meaning something else is called conceit.

Strong emotions often stir strong and vivid expressions. Donne uses the quote "for God's sake hold your tongue and let me love." This is a defiant stand against someone preventing him from loving. Defiance and love often come together to create passion. However, the [more] passionate a love, the more bitter its effects. The Duchess has a passionate and intense love for Antonio, which ultimately leads to her death. Passion in Donne's poetry can lead to bitter effects also. In Valediction Forbidden Weeping, Donne's speaker 'drowns the sphere'. This heightens the idea the speaker is crying for the loss of his lover. 'Drowning the sphere' is very passionate language and could be compared with the idea of Petrarchan love poetry, loving with an intense passion.

**Band: 5**

**Mark: 21**

Clear, secure and well documented. Good use of quotation. Competent analysis and good range of reference.

**General comment**

**Thorough script, with good level of detail – always competent – widely referenced.**

## Exemplar 5 BAND 4

### SHAKESPEARE *OTHELLO*

'For a hero, Othello is too easy to pity, too hard to like.'

By considering the dramatic presentation of Othello, evaluate this view.

[30]

## ANSWER

In Shakespeare's *Othello*, dramatic Presentation is a key aspect in which helps the audience, to establish a sense of empathy and sympathy to the characters.

The protagonist Othello is one of Shakespeare's most memorable character, although the audience is not introduced, to Othello until Act 1 Scene 2. Characters Roderigo and antagonist Iago give a negative description of the tragic hero, 'I hate the Moor!'. He is depicted as a self loving, animalistic creature with reference to him as a "barbaric horse" and as an "old black ram". All which animalistic imagery evokes a dramatic representation far from one worthy 'for a hero'.

AO2 Fair comment on effect of opening

When Othello is introduced the representation created in the previous act subverts what the audience may have preconceived from the description. Instead a polite and valiant soldier is introduced. Othello's nobility is reinforced through Shakespeare's use of blank verse which makes the character stand out. Although of a noble appearance this does not mean that the audience likes or empathises with 'valiant Othello' as the presentation from Iago and Roderigo could still be displayed. Although the use of epithets such as 'valiant Othello', could perhaps leave the audience to an extent confused.

AO2 Useful development: sense of audience

However as the play proceeds, the audience develop a sense of catharsis and sympathy towards the hero, through antagonist Othello's soliloquies. Soliloquies are a vital aspect to the which gives the audience an insight into, what is to come, in Iago's case - the start of destruction. He plans to do this by making Othello believe 'thou wife art false' and even discloses that he believes Othello "Tixt thy sheets and done thy office". This again demonstrates further evidence to earlier descriptions. The ideas of "moors" and black man in the Elizabethan/Jacobean, period in which the play was written, often depicted "moors" as the devil and in general pieces of art work from the period the devil is seen as a black man in hell surrounded by fire. This representation is one which audiences would identify with and, would help condone the idea of a "dishonest Moor". The representation is common in Shakespeare's work, such as this in which a prominent, character was displayed as a villain.

AO4 Fair AO4 but AO2 limited on 'soliloquies'



Despite such representations, there are general aspects to the play which, revert this assumption and Othello is presented as a loving and almost gentle character through his marriage with Desdemona. The characters embrace and love is evident to all, even villainious Iago states that the two are "well tun'd". However due to Desdemona being a white aristocrat and Othello a Civil Servant the two are not equally matched and as critic Elle James states "Desdemona and Othello are like any other Shakespearean couple with a political conflict". This is expressed through the social inequality and a marriage which is described by her father as "not of this world". Desdemona and Othello can be compared with Romeo and Juliette two of Shakespears, other star crossed lovers who die tragically. The inequallity and reception that the two characters receive can evoke a sense of pity in the audience even modern ones today as the topic of forbidden love is universal.

AO3 Some helpful critical comment and hardworking analogy

Throughout the majority of the play, Othello is presented to subvert the typical 'moorish' expectation. However the audience watches as the character encounters and through Iago embraces hubris. This is evident through the characters downward spiral where he, encounters a seizure and also begins to speak with the same idioms as Iago using colloquialisms.

AO2 Becoming vague

But the most evident way in which the down fall is presented is when Othello hit's Desdemona and has no remorse. He even declairs "I will kill her". A once noble and heroic character's blind pride which some critics state is due to his inferiority in Vanican society. Although the down fall does not occur until a change of setting, from Venice to Cyprus due to the sub-plot of the war going on.

AO3 Interesting if cryptic

Othellos inferiority is what makes him so, easy to pity however as his downfall reached a climax and he, declared "let black vengeance rise" the audience may again see Othello in a role reversal with the villainous Iago.

In conclusion I think that although Othello is the hero to which, so many love and pity there are features to the character which are hard to like however, I believe that these elements are ones which are caused by Iago, shown through Othellos use of Iago's idioms it almost appears that, he has become out of sync with his wife and becomes 'well tun'd' with the wrong character. And it is the situations which occur such as the notorious loss of the handkerchief, which brings the negative aspects to the forefront of the play and Catalyses the ever so tragic ending.

AO1 energetic conclusion

**Band: 4**

**Mark: 19**

Competent and controlled but uneven – moments of clarity but much argument by implication.

## Exemplar 5 BAND 4

### DRAMA AND POETRY PRE-1800 WEBSTER AND CHAUCER

'People will do anything, no matter how foolish, to get what they want.'

In the light of this view, discuss ways in which writers represent ambition. In your answer, compare one drama text and one poetry text from the lists above.

[30]

## ANSWER

A02/4 Quite useful overview contextual material, though quotation is shaky

A03 Useful link, more needed on actual nature of cardinal/court

A04 Some useful but generalised views on religious context

In John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, and Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Pardoner's Tale*, ambition is represented in several ways through elevating through social hierarchies. In the poetry text the pardoner's tale the audience is presented with a character, which seeks to get what he wants by any means possible. Through the structure of Confession, Sermon and moral tale the pardoner aims to deceive in order to live comfortably. "I wol takee fro the small Booy although they havee nothyng". The Pardoner states that he is willing, to exploit the vulnerable, widowed or stupid to satisfy his greed.

This is similar to the drama - *The Duchess of Malfi*. In the first Act the audience is introduced to the antagonist Bosola, who like the pardoner is from a low birth and seeks to gain status and money. As the character is introduced the audience is made aware that he is a "Court Gal". The audience then comes to understand that Bosola will be working for the Cardinal, this is a representation of ambition as it not only shows the extent Bosola will go to for status and money but also highlights the hypocrisy of the Cardinal a so called religious figure.

The church at the time was becoming an institution known for greed and hypocrisy and the Pardoner and the Cardinal are clear representations of this. The pardoner's ambition conflicts with his role of selling pardons and relics with the need for money. In the Prologue although not authorised "he stood up a clerk in his pulpit". The use of a simile indicates that through the pardoner's ambition he may conflict his role as a religious figure which makes him appear false. Similar to the Cardinal in *The Duchess of Malfi* - a cardinal in the Catholic Church, who fornicates with Julia while making her husband a cuckold. Another presentation of this is the Cardinal's change from a Cardinal to a soldier. This indicates that he may be confused in regards to what to aspire to.

A desire for ambition is also presented in the quest for love. The Duchess the protagonist in the drama is shown as a widow and contrasting to the usual female presentations in Jacobean drama she uses her status to gain what she wants. "The misery of us that are born great and forced to woo", shows not only the Duchess status but the inferiority between her and her future husband Antonio. The Duchess also explicitly displays her sexual ambitions through double entendres such as "lay



AO2 Compressed but sensible references

your naked sword between my two legs". Not only does the Duchess instigate the majority of the sexual ambition but she also presents her lack of boundaries due to her aristocratic background.

AO1/2 Rather a lot attempted: quotations are very shaky

Similarly in the pardoners prologue it is a female who "beutee hath killed her". Which triggers the tragic tale of the rioters. The tale comes under the moral tale structure and the Pardoner admits "though a vicious man I am yet a moral tale canne thy tell". The rioters have the ambition to commit revenge and they pledge to 'lyve and deith form all' but instead provide a suitable back drop for the moral of the entire tale "Cupidis est al malamorum" which translates into greed is the route of all evil. Although the rioters do not set out initially to become consumed by greed this occurs through the coming across the personified Death.

Death is personified into the character of the old man, who leads the rioters to their tragedy - coins under a tree. Critic Anita Loom states that "the rioters are a reflection of the pardoners greed and the consequences". The pardoner is presented throughout as a character consumed by greed "I wol drinke", a character that indulges in the very vices he preaches against again reinforces the hypocrisy of the character.

AO2 Argument and comparison ambitious but not altogether clear

However the pardoners greed could also be seen as an ambition of acceptance as he is criticised by the omniscient Chaucer who in the General Prologue admits 'I trow he were a gelding or a mare'. Then in the final lines through his own sermon whilst his last exertion of his ambition of a so-called greed is presented towards the host we see a much more vulnerable side to the pardoner as "the pardoner not sayde one word". This can be compared to Antonio in the Duchess of Malfi on his quest for love and status his ambition leads him to tragedy, not embarrassment and vulnerability like the pardoner but to death at the hands of the Duchess brothers.

AO1 Outline of further ideas: ambitious, but AO1 clarity precarious at times

In Conclusion, the writers represent ambition through the characters themselves and the actions in the play, which display the extent they will go to in order to get what they want. Given more time I would have discussed further how additional characters display the qualities of ambition and also the linguistic techniques writers use to display this. I think that both the Duchess of Malfi and the Pardoners tale present ambition in a valid and relevant way in which the writers are able to entrap the reader. Ambition plays a part in all characters and aspects of the texts, as none are displayed as satisfied with who they are and what they represent which is why they use ambition and anything necessary to fulfil this.

**Band: 4**

**Mark: 16**

Uneven – some competence on 'ambition'. Competent structure of argument. Some errors of understanding.

**General comment**

Uneven script, demonstrating knowledge and structural ambition, but undermined by lack of clarity and occasional errors of understanding.

# Exemplar 6 BAND 3/4

## SHAKESPEARE *OTHELLO*

'For a hero, Othello is too easy to pity, too hard to like.'

By considering the dramatic presentation of Othello, evaluate this view.

[30]

### ANSWER

AO1 Interesting opening

Othello's character is a very hard one to like, his gullible nature and violent temper overpower his positive side that we see in the beginning of the play. Personally, I would not see Othello as the hero of this play, more like another victim in Iago's plan, for instance, Iago says in the very beginning of the play, "I hate the moore....." which leads on to Iago's plan ruining Othello's life.

AO2 Lot of material: critical views not entirely integrated into argument

I agree with the statement as I do think that Othello is not the typical 'hero' type if even a hero at all. Pity for Othello comes easily when you see his patience beginning to erode "If she be false I shall not believe it". When Iago tells Othello that Desdemona is unfaithful he begins to doubt himself, some believe that it is because of his insecurities due to the colour of his skin, "Othello is an alien, socially and ethically" Caryl Phillips. Even though some critics believe that "the story would be the same even if Othello's race was unknown, the story would not change, his race is irrelevant" - L. R. Levis. None the less pity comes through for his character when Iago begins to make Othello believe that Desdemona has been unfaithful to him, as everyone begins to realise that Desdemona may be killed we pity Othello as we, as the audience know that Othello will only find out the truth about Iago's lies once Desdemona is dead. "Kill me tomorrow my Lord but let me live tonight". "Devil!...." "let me say one prayer" "it is too late (he smothers her)". Although we do find ourselves pitying Othello there is much here to dislike about him through his sheer naive behaviour as well as common sense for example, when Othello speaks with Desdemona in the church, he does not once ask her if she's been unfaithful, instead he believed Iago's lies and killed her through the persuasion of Iago.

AO1 Structurally hard to follow

The main flaw of Othello is the dramatic change that he goes through, from being a kind and patient man to an angry, murderous lunatic. The change is gradual yet sudden. The outburst from Othello makes him hard to like as a character because there are more flaws than there is positive about him. The dramatic presentation of Othello occurs near the end of the play when he confronts Iago for lying to him he stabs Iago and then takes his own life this shows that Othello really did love Desdemona and because he loved her so much he could not handle the grief of the thought that Desdemona had been unfaithful to him.

AO1 entire play in a paragraph: but v rushed: what is 'dramatic presentation' taken to mean?

Further more, Othello as a character is easy to pity due to his lack of sense and the dramatic irony that Iago is playing with Othello's feelings and life. As well as the pain that he shows in the thought that Desdemona had been unfaithful and then when he killed her to only find out she had not done anything wrong, the fact that he really did love Desdemona creates pity for his ignorance too. "She loved me for the dangers I had passed and I loved her for she did pity them". He is hard to like for his sheer stupidity for believing Iago without proper evidence, (not including the handkerchief as Othello should have confronted her in the first place.) as well as his very over reacted violent actions toward Desdemona such as "Devil!(he strikes her)" to which Desdemona replies "I have not deserved this" and when killing her; "Banish me my lord but kill me not!" - "Nay if you strive". He did not give her a chance, what also gives him an unlikeable character was his quick change from calm to angry in a matter of acts.

AO2 cascade of references, though largely descriptive

AO1 establishes view in conclusion

Overall, Othello is more of a character to be pitied than of a character to be liked due to his quick assumptions, ignorance that is mistaken for innocence and how gullible he was to the "Honest Iago" and his lies.

**Band: 4**

**Mark: 17**

Straightforward argument, competently structured, but with some repetition.

## Exemplar 6 BAND 3/4

### DRAMA AND POETRY PRE-1800 WEBSTER AND CHAUCER

'People will do anything, no matter how foolish, to get what they want.'

In the light of this view, discuss ways in which writers represent ambition. In your answer, compare one drama text and one poetry text from the lists above.

[30]

## ANSWER

AO2/4 Establishes terms

In both texts, *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Pardoner's Tale*, they have characters that have done something drastic to get what they want. For the Duchess of Malfi, it was Bosola, Ferdinand and the Cardinal as well as the Duchess herself. Whereas in the *Pardoner's Tale*, it was the Pardoner and the three sinners who do so. In this essay I will explore the drastic actions that some characters have done to get 'ahead' in both the Drama and Poetry.

In the *Pardoner's Tale*, the Pardoner is set in a party and the host asks for a story with a moral lesson in it, but before that the pardoner had said some very non moral things such as "I preche nothing but for greed" which in Chaucers time would have ben an outrageous thing to say as pardoners are seen as holy messengers. Some people who read the '*Pardoner's Tale*' believe that the pardoner says these things because he may have been drinking at the hosts house and so the more he drunk, the more he confessed. In the *Duchess of Malfi* a similar thing happens to Ferdinand. Ferdinand is determined for his sister to not remarry in the secret rumour that its because he is in love with his sister, however, because he knows she doesn't love him in that way, he becomes controlling of her life and orders Bosola to spy on her and find out if she has a secret husband. "People will do anything, no matter how foolish, to get what they want." And in the *Pardoner's tale* he even steals and tricks the poor with lies and empty threats so that he gets a good enough income to be comfortable, then with the Duchess of Malfi, Ferdinand wants his sister, but because she is his sister and she doesn't feel the same, in a rage, he demands Bosola to strangle the Duchess - which later on he regrets doing. Ferdinand, unlike others, never seemed to have an actual ambition in his actions, he was working all on rage and jealousy.

AO4 Very generalised: much plot narration: tends to offer a cascade of ideas

The Duchess's ambition was, in my opinion and perception of the drama, was that she just wanted to be happy and have a husband who would make her happy and feel safe. In Act 2 Scene 1, when she and Antonio marry, he is reluctant and it is the Duchess who persuades him otherwise which would have been seen as 'different' in the date it was set in.

AO4 Very general

Bosola, with the guilt after killing the Duchess and Cariola as well as the Duchess's children, he searches for revenge on Ferdinand and the Cardinal although

AO2 Further narrative cascade with some AO3 linking by implication

unfortunately he mistakes Antonio for Ferdinand or the Cardinal and stabs and kills Antonio, in light of this, it connects to him doing anything to get what they want and Bosola wanted closure for the people he had killed for Ferdinand. Death was also in the Pardoner's Tale, moral story. When the three men found the gold at the tree where the old man had sent them they all thought about killing one another through either poison or ambush. Their ambition was to have more of the gold to themselves, the irony is that in the end, none of them get the gold because they all kill each other through their blindness of gluttony.

Cariola surprisingly fits with this question due to her begging and pleads before she is sentenced to death. "Wait! I am with child!" "I am due to be married!" all of her small lies an attempt to persuade the people to not kill her, this contrasts with the Duchess's reaction to death as she seems to 'welcome' it, the differences between the two show that their ambitions are completely different to what they want to happen.

Ferdinand's ambition was never clear though he, out of all the characters fit the statement "people will do anything to get what they want, however foolish." As he himself didn't know what he wanted, he made it out as though he hated his sister and that he wanted her dead but as soon as Bosola does so, he blames him for "the murder of my dear friend" his sister, even though it was he, who argued for her to be killed.

John Webster shows ambition through the eyes of the characters when they speak their monologues the effect makes the audience aware of each character's wants and desires in the drama through monologues or soliloquies. Whereas in Geoffrey Chaucer's Pardoner's Tale, it's more gradually shown of what ambitions the characters have as the story graduates to the end. 5 With this, the effect is it keeps the reader interested as well as curious to what their ambitions are for the actions that the characters are doing for example; the pardoner has gotten away with stealing for years so why admit to it all now? "Even a widow [Unfinished]"

AO2 Some attempt to address narrative method

**Band: 3**

**Mark: 14**

Often narrative, with some attempts to develop comparative discussion. Uncertain reading of Chaucer. Very little or no AO4 address.

**General comment**

**At its best, straightforward, but much less secure in Section B.**

