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SECTION 1 SHAKESPEARE
HAMLET

(a) Discuss the passage from Act 3 Scene 4, exploring Shakespeare’s use of language and its dramatic effects. [15]

(b) ‘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. [15]
Tamb suggests this he is presenting his own self-repr.
The alliteration in ‘Nay, I knew not’ is used to present
Hamlet’s nonchalant attitude over his bloody act. I
produced a swift response. It highlights the impulsivity
his action and how the Prince has no
remorse. The use of ‘O’ from Polonius and
Gertrude is used to show the intense emotion
which allows the audience to understand the spectrum
of the action and as Hamlet’s attitude and
language, including his rhyming couplet, suggest
no ‘bloody deed’ has been committed.

This leads on to there being a great The juxtaposition
between the ‘I see the Queen’s reaction and Hamlet’s
shows the audience that how isolated the characters
are from each other. It is also a reversal of
morals as Hamlet had been the virtuous Prince
who wanted to avenge his father yet has been
made into a murderer whereas the Queen acts
innocent when in reality she is still the guilty one.

The repeating ‘d’ sound in ‘dead...duke...dead’
emphasises the rage Hamlet feels from his actions.

It also prepares the audience for the next
act, murderer slaying as the harsh sounds foreshadow
it.

Emphasis is placed on Hamlet’s accusation that his
mother killed the King through the rhyming couplet
used. The rhythm formed from the
in the ‘Hamlet’ which increases the intensity of (the accusation
in to the audience as it is a
Shakespeare uses personification of abstract concepts to remind the audience of Hamlet’s humanist approach such as virtue and fortune. Hamlet claims that the Queen ‘calls virtue hypocrisy’. Suggesting that she has been separated from her own virtue and is acting away from it. Other imagery emphasises the Queen’s morality and Hamlet’s rage such as ‘blisters’ and ‘plucks the very soul’ have been used in language to present a contrast between Queen’s appearance and reality.

Hamlet is destroyed by his impulsiveness not his uncertainty.

Impulsiveness → acts as an instrument not an agent  
Uncertainty → moral dilemma humanist revenger

Hamlet was written in 1601, at the height of the Renaissance where tragedies were fashionable. Aristotle claimed that a good tragedy would have a structure which resulted in audience catharsis. Where at the climax and expositio, there would be great violence and the plot complications would be resolved. ‘Hamlet’ does not fit this as not a play which fully satisfies the audience’s bloodlust due to the protagonist’s uncertainty and delay.

Hamlet. Prince Hamlet is a character of impulse as proven by his acts of murder, violence which lead to the murder of Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. This impulsiveness is argued to have been born from his madness which develops with the play however this madness is not a argued to be only an act. It was typical for revenge to feign madness in order to carry out acts of revenge and Hamlet himself admits “this is not madness” and that he would put on an “act in disposition”. Critics have argued over whether his madness is faked or whether it actually manifested into a real insanity.
True madness then Hamlet cannot be deemed impulsive
or accused of his impulsivity, destroying him as it is
his 1st descent into insanity which would have caused
it. On the other hand it is clear that Hamlet organizes
mad in front of Claudius and his denials and despite
using nonsense he is fact using appropriate humour
showing an awareness. This would suggest though he is
impulsive and his murder of Polonius was an impulsive
action as it did not serve to further his act of revenge.

'Hamlet' approaches the revenge differently from an
alternative perspective as the focus is on the validity
of revenge instead of actually acting. The Prince
Hamlet's uncertainty comes both from his humanist
approach but also from his morality. The antithesis
of the Ghost forces Hamlet into a quasi-knowing state
as he in unsure whether he is a 'spirit o' health or
goblin damned'. If the ghost is a 'Spirit of health
then revenge must be committed to avenge him yet he
could be... the devil ['assuming a pleasing shape'] in
which case Hamlet cannot should not sacrifice for him.
The uncertainty over the Ghost's intentions is one reason
why Hamlet is destroyed as he doesn't want to act on behalf of evil and damn himself. Another
source of uncertainty was from the validity of the
Ghost's accusations. Hamlet spends so much time
confirming his uncle's guilt that he loses perspective
on the time planning revenge. This humanist
questioning approach is therefore a possible cause
of Hamlet's destruction as it prevents him from simply
acting and instead leads to revenge only being enacted
at the last opportunity when he is already dying.
The greatest uncertainty however is Hamlet’s moral conflict. He is uncertain whether it is more moral to commit revenge to avenge his father’s ‘infidel, unnatural murder’ or whether he should abide by the Christian teachings of ‘Thou shalt not kill’. The Renaissance was a time of religious change where Protestantism removed the Catholic belief in purgatory. This may lead people to question religion and whether many began to question the truth of authority, whether it be the sovereign or God’s. Traditionally revenge was God’s business however this new found challenge of authority lead people to assume there was also the conflict with Roman beliefs that if you were duty blood to avenge a fallen father, Hamlet suffers with uncertainty over which value will prevent his eternal damnation.

Revenge is an act excessive of justice and occurs as an act against the establishment. Revenge was expected to produce a revenger with a tragic flaw who could challenge authority. Hamlet does precipitate this however Johnson has claimed that Hamlet is more of an instrument than an agent of revenge. This suggests that when it is Hamlet’s indecision which lead to his downfall as an instrument plays no active part in carrying out action so could therefore not be impulsive. On the other hand Voltaire accused Shakespeare of writing a ‘vulgar and barbarous play’ which shows how the violent elements were received with distaste. 18th Century critics often criticised the violent aspects of the play which does not imply Hamlet’s impulsiveness as this is the source of blood
and violence.

* The evidence suggesting Hamlet is destroyed by impulsiveness comes from his murder of Polonius, which is only a minor part of the play as a whole who's focus is instead on the questioning prince. With so many uncertainties surrounding revenge and the Compuho of Denmark it is clear to see that it is Hamlet's uncertainty which causes his downfall as it leads to lack of action.

Bradley commented that it is Hamlet's internal conflict and questioning which leads to his destruction and inability to act. He is too focused on debating the validity of revenge and questioning the moral conflicts of his position. Romanticists believed that his introspective approach lead to inaction as one who focuses on internal emotional state cannot act especially not impulsively. Alternatively T.S. Eliot suggested it was a failure of artistic development from Shakespeare which lead to Hamlet's character's inaction. Less primitive crafting would have allowed & Hamlet to resolve his uncertainty. These critical interpretations therefore only focus on uncertainty as ambiguity is a trait that follows all aspects of the play.

EXAMINER COMMENTARY

This very good pair of answers contains some undoubtedly 'excellent' elements. The candidate presents sophisticated and erudite ideas with fluency and – at times – a degree of originality. The answers are not without some faults and this means that the overall mark for the Section does not move towards the very top of the range for Level 6. With the exception of a contextualising opening paragraph, the content of part (a) is admirably focused on the dominant Assessment Objectives – with linguistic analysis presented via well-developed and consistently detailed discussion (including consideration of rhetorical techniques, emphasis and personification). Part (b) is admirably focused on different interpretations: these consistently inform the answer (with mention of specific named critics as well as allusions to broader approaches).

This is an excellent pair of responses deserving recognition comfortably into the Level 6 range: 27.
(a) Discuss the passage from Act 3 Scene 4, exploring Shakespeare's use of language and its dramatic effects. [15]

(b) '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. [15]
Specifically to not only show the madness through
his disjointed language: “A bloody deed! - Almost as
bad...” and erratic behaviour, but yet through
the introduction of Gertrude actually having an
opinion on action rather than seeing the
omens, having place through Hamlet’s own view.

It then comes into question whether Hamlet’s view
is ever an accurate representation of the
drama taking place. Shakespeare only
seems to allow us to view him outside
dramatic action through Hamlet’s
progressive madness and opinion of Claudius
and Gertrude’s supposed “innocent”
relationship. Yet it comes to question
whether “everybody was it came,” and if the
relationship has been justified, as this would
then be supported by the language used by
Gertrude in the final soliloquy a voice on the
situation.

Shakespeare suggests that his aim was to
place Hamlet as the protagonist is not
an accurate representation of the whole
situation, by introducing us to see a
different view for the audience, away
from Hamlet’s immersion in his own
ideology caused by his madness, as the
character treat are only ever seen through
Hamlet’s eyes.
2.6. The impulsivity of the situation for Hamlet has been turning action against what he supposed himself capable to be that is "rotten in the state of Denmark." The attention to impulsivity without finalising action in the play but having been the focus of the same ideology throughout the play with his intended action taken out at this significant time, were intended try to be due to his own uncertainty.

Shakespeare introduces Hamlet to be stuck in a constant state of inaction as what is considered normally acceptable to take revenge in this situation, it what is needed, yet the conscience argues against this because it is morally wrong, as is murder in at the highest of sin to commit for revenge. Leaving Hamlet in this constant state. "Conscience doth make cowards of us all." Shakespeare understands that this is what drives the play on emotionally. The building up of frustration for Hamlet to take strike at the king as the final scene of the play from this suggested impulsivity. It ultimately is Hamlet's weakness leading to his own death as a situation which could have been prevented.

The whole play revolves the theme of indiscipline, over time seeing Hamlet to fall into his own development of madness suggesting to the audience that Hamlet's mind could be what is "rotten in the state of Denmark." It may only see the impulsivity action of the play through the eyes of Hamlet we can see this development as each opportunity for him to take action
EXAMINER COMMENTARY

This pair of very good answers contains some hints of overall excellence in approaching the play, the respective questions, and the requirements of the relevant Assessment Objectives for each part. The context question is – at times – erudite and frequently focuses on linguistic techniques in the passage (as required). There is a particularly strong emphasis on the dramatic implications of Shakespeare’s linguistic techniques. Part (b) again approaches the play from a perspective of dramatic practicality. Critical views of the play are explored (with some hints of excellence) with implicit – if not always explicit - engagement.

This clear, very good set of responses demonstrates some signs of excellence: Level : 26
(a) Discuss the passage from Act 3 Scene 4, exploring Shakespeare's use of language and its dramatic effects. [15]

(b) '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. [15]
intruding fool" would possibly make the audience turn away from Hamlet and have less sympathy for him. This action is also a stark contrast between Hamlet's long debate as to whether he should kill the praying Claudius, and send him "to heaven": The sudden change in tack is quite dramatic, creating a sense of urgency and shock where there wasn't before.

Shakespeare creates a sense of sympathy in this scene, too, with Hamlet's treatment of Gertrude. Despite his apparent assumption that Gertrude was in on the murder of his father, she doesn't seem to know anything about it, since he repeated questions Hamlet:

"What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue."

However, the audience can't be sure of her lack of knowledge, as she could be lying - in fact, the only time her and Hamlet explicitly mention the idea of killing King Hamlet is at the beginning with her exclamation: "as kill a king." After this, they don't explicitly mention it, creating a sense of intrigue and confusion as the audience can't know for sure what happened.

Shakespeare's use of strong language also helps to create a pantoic atmosphere, emphasising Hamlet's heightened emotions. Before this, Shakespeare presents Hamlet and Gertrude's relationship as at least close, possibly close - but at least as having some sort of respect. However, here Hamlet seems to have lost all of that, as he goes on a sort of rampage of words, throwing insult after insult at
Gertrude, threatening to "wring your heart," and using extreme language to paint a vivid image of her apparent sin. This extremity gives the scene an almost violent atmosphere, as he tells about "such an act that... calls virtue hypocrite" and "plucks the very soul." The intensity here is often explored by directors in many different ways, often through the use of physical violence and even sometimes with reference to an incestuous vein in his language—something that would shock any audience, nowadays or back in Shakespeare's time.

To conclude, Shakespeare creates an intense atmosphere in this scene, shocking audiences through his use of strong language to depict Hamlet's extreme feelings, and also through his sudden change in mindset. His disgust for Gertrude and the dead Polonius is so shocking, possibly causing the audience to feel less sympathy for him and more for Gertrude, who apparently doesn't know what Hamlet is talking about (although she may be lying).
Hamlet's character is known for his uncertainty as it is shown through his soliloquies and long debates about morality. However, as the play goes on and his apparent madness becomes more and more deeply engrained, he also becomes more impulsive as he makes more rash decisions on his mission for revenge—ultimately ending in his destruction.

At the start of the play, Hamlet could come across as rather proactive—despite getting over it, while he begins with a long, thought-provoking soliloquy about suicide (begun with "O that this too solid flesh would melt"), as soon as he hears the ghost's message he tells Marcellus that he will sometimes put on "an antic disposition." This jump to apparent action seems as though he is straight away is going to do something. He also observes, however, this "antic disposition" ends up flitting on and off, simply causing a confusion for the other characters as he continues to debate what to do. While he eventually decides to put on the play "The Mousetrap", he still debates.

Another sign of impulsiveness on Hamlet's part is in Gertrude's chambers, when he kills Polonius with no warning. This could be seen as the start of his downfall, as after this Claudius sends him to England to be killed. Ophelia goes mad, and Laertes begins to seek revenge on him. The suddenness of his actions here show a stark contrast with the lack of willing...
displayed as Claudius prays in a previous scene, giving the idea that he is getting himself together; although not in the best way as in this scene he displays impulsiveness as he kills without a second thought, declaring "a cat that whoever is behind the arras is dead, for a ducat, dead!"

However, while that scene could be seen as the start of Hamlet's downfall because of what follows after, the act of previous actions while Claudius is praying could have acted differently while Claudius was praying then he would probably not have ended up dead. If he hadn't been so uncertain about killing him, and in a way in what could be interpreted as an attempt to play God and just killed him, then many of the other things that ended up leading to his destruction would probably not have happened.

Also, while Hamlet can definitely be seen as rather un-proactive with regards to taking revenge on Claudius, when he is compared to Laertes his indecisiveness becomes even more apparent. While Hamlet decides to "put on an antic disposition", Laertes straight away declares that he wants to "cut [Hamlet's] throat i'th'church". The contrast emphasises the effects of Hamlet's uncertainty and also brings up the notion that if Hamlet had killed Claudius while he attempted to pray, nobody else need have been killed - there would have only been one death.
In conclusion, I would say that I disagree with the idea that Hamlet’s destruction came about because of his impulsiveness rather than his uncertainty. While the ultimate end of his life came from his rashness and possible madness as he killed Polonius, Polonius would most likely not have been killed if Hamlet hadn’t been so indecisive when he had the prime opportunity to kill Claudius and take his revenge. And while the way he seemingly sprung into action by his reign of madness, when his actions are compared to Laertes’ upon hearing of his father’s death, the contrast puts Hamlet’s lack of decisiveness and action into perspective, and so making me feel that the statement is largely untrue (although not completely).

EXAMINER COMMENTARY

There are some signs of ‘excellence’ in this pair of responses – most notably in the part (a) answer. The script suggests that the candidate has engaged with the play on a profound level – and there are striking signs of a strong personal response in both answers. The response to the context question is carefully focused on the requirements of the question and the demands of the Assessment Objectives. Linguistic analysis is – at times – well-developed and consistently detailed. The response to the essay question (by contrast) fails to meet Level 6 criteria: a somewhat colloquial and discursive tone is symptomatic of this.

Overall this is a ‘good, clear’ pair of responses – Level 5: 24.
(a) Discuss the passage from Act 3 Scene 4, exploring Shakespeare’s use of language and its dramatic effects.

(b) ‘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.

Many of us do not realise that several phrases that we use in conversation daily originated from William Shakespeare’s work. He is arguably the most famous playwright in British literary history, and all of this is reflected in the language that he used in his plays.

The passage presents the scene in which Hamlet confronts Gertrude in her bedroom about Claudius, intimidating her greatly. When he mistook Polonius for Claudius hiding, he killed him. This scene is where the audience first begins to realise the gravity of the situation in Hamlet’s mind, and how he is progressively becoming unstable.

The extract begins with Hamlet giving Gertrude several short orders in his use of command sentences. He says: “Come, come, and you sit down: you shall not budge.” Shakespeare deliberately made use of these lines to build tension at the beginning of the passage. Being the Queen of Denmark, as well as Hamlet’s mother, the audience expect Gertrude to have a certain level of power over Hamlet, and she does; however, this relationship is very complicated. Hamlet demonstrates a power reversal by ordering his mother to sit down and not move. This was likely to shock
the audience, but was purposely designed by Shakespeare to demonstrate Hamlet as a character. The short, spasmodic clauses, “Come, come, and you sit down,” gave the image of Hamlet’s uncontainable anger and rising madness. This highlights the unpredictability of Hamlet’s actions and thus builds tension right at the beginning of the extract.

When Hamlet murders Polonius, the moment has the potential to be climatic. However, Hamlet’s lack of ownership of his actions takes away the dramatic effect of the moment. After Hamlet seizes Polonius, Gertrude asks “O me, what has thou done?” To which Hamlet responds: “Now, I know not. Is it the king?” Hamlet clearly doesn’t know who he has killed, and his lack of empathy and compassion here highlights his impulsivity as a character, as he was not sure if it was Claudius who was hiding when he plunged his knife through the arras. Hamlet wastes no moment discussing Polonius’ murder; instead, going on to discuss Claudius and Gertrude’s relationship, Hamlet does not express guilt at all, and Shakespeare decides not to have Hamlet grace a even say Polonius’ name exemplifies his madness and compassion to the audience.
Shakespeare’s Hamlet is a very unpredictable character. At the beginning of the play, Hamlet is presented with a task of condoning revenge for his late father. When Hamlet does not go and avenge his father’s death immediately, and kill Claudius, the audience learn that he is not a typically impulsive character.

We know that grief-grieving people follow a particular pattern with their behaviour. Hamlet’s behaviour is a lot less predictable because of the gravity and sheer quantity of the situations he has had to deal with. This unpredictability makes Hamlet have to pinpoint as a character, as he shows both aspects of both impulsive and uncertainty.

Hamlet’s impulsiveness is the cause of many unnecessary deaths in the play, as he murders Polonius in a moment of unsanity. However, had Hamlet been impulsive from the beginning of the play, he would have conducted his revenge on Claudius, and other characters would not have had to pay the ultimate price. One could argue that it is Hamlet’s lack of considering
and unpredictability that destroys him, and everyone around him. It is not as simple as ‘Is Hamlet impulsive or uncertain?’, because he is an unanswerable complex character who has moments that show both of these traits, we know to what his ultimate goal is, but since he does not immediately go and avenge his father’s murder, he cannot be described as a definitely impulsive character.

Hamlet is more thoughtful than the statement suggests, which he demonstrates when Claudius is in prayer. Hamlet almost decides to kill him, but upon considering it, realises that if he was murdered whilst praying, Claudius would go to heaven and not suffer or pay for his crime. Hamlet decides not to kill Claudius in this moment because he wants him to pay for what he did. This scene is where we begin to see the internal battle that Hamlet has between Christian forgiveness and Roman revenge. The audience can see that, unthinkingly, Hamlet wants to honour his father and avenge his death. Hamlet’s thoughtfulness allows him to think of his religion, use it to benefit his revenge plan, and not act on his urges. How can a character so thoughtful be described as impulsive?
EXAMINER COMMENTARY

Both parts of this answer approach the text, the questions, and the requirements of the respective relevant Assessment Objectives in a ‘good’ and clear way. The context response (a) begins with some generalised contextual information about the place of Shakespeare’s work in literary history but soon moves on to some developed and detailed discussion of aspects of language, form and structure. The answer also makes a concerted effort to address the dramatic implications of these linguistic techniques. In part (b) the candidate constructs a well-structured argument with a clear line of development. There is also some good recognition and exploration of different interpretations apparent. Both answers are some distance away from Level 6 ‘excellence’.

This section deserves recognition at a solid point in Level 5: 23.
(a) Discuss the passage from Act 3 Scene 4, exploring Shakespeare’s use of language and its dramatic effects.

(b) ‘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.

Script 5: Level 5 borderline
to carry it out. Yet in this scene, excitement has
got the better of him and he has killed in a rash and
mean.
Almost it could be argued he had the intention for the king but
he had no real knowledge on who he was killing as they were
behind the arras.

Hamlet Shakespeare Hamlet then tells Gertrude that it was
Claudius who killed the king, as well as including a small insult
embedded within it. “Almost as bad, good mother. As kill a king and
marry with his brother.” Shakespeare shows Hamlet’s wits, and
proceed to tell Gertrude that the murder he just did was almost
as bad as killing a king. Then to “marry with his brother” implies that
Gertrude may have been in on the act. If killing old Hamlet
perhaps. But it still shows that in Hamlet’s eyes the murder was perhaps
on the same level as marrying Claudius. Essentially having a go at
Gertrude for marrying him.
Hamlet is destroyed by his impetuousness, not his uncertainty.

b) I disagree with this point. Hamlet was destroyed by his impetuousness, not his uncertainty. Because throughout the play he appears to casually make impulsive decisions, like during Act 3 scene 4, for example, where he impulsively kills someone (expecting it to be Claudius). At times he is not being decisive enough, by forgetting with the idea of murder and revenge, but not going through with any plans, unlike Laertes does at the end. Hamlet therefore results in death because of his uncertainty to follow through with revenge in the final scene.

Firstly, at the start of the play we see Hamlet pondering over the idea of revenge, yet questions whether suicide is the best route for him to go. “O, this too solid frame of man will melt.” Here, this shows that he wishes for death upon himself, for him to just melt away. This is the first of a recurring theme of suicide in the play from Hamlet, which contributes to his inner struggles on revenge. A major factor towards his death is his idleness to act, unlike we see Laertes do in the closing scenes of the play.

Hamlet’s decision to pretend to be mad adds to the reason why he is killed. This is a sign of his uncertainty as he had no real plan going forward - he is not sure. “As I perforce hereafter, there I put on this antic disposition.” Here he declares his false descent into madness, and in my opinion this is a clear indication of Hamlet’s uncertainty for the future. His life is in turmoil as it is, with the death of his father and quick remarriage of his mother to her uncle, also suspected murder of his father. Therefore, he is uncertain for the future and what it holds for him. He is constantly boiling with ideas to plot and kill Claudius, yet the closest he gets in the play is when he writes a play about a brother killing a king, which only spooks Claudius. His hesitation and uncertainty
EXAMINER COMMENTARY

In this pair of responses the essay question is slightly more successful than the attempt at the context passage. In the latter there is a tendency to rely on plot narration and the standard of linguistic analysis fails to meet the criteria of AO2 in Level 5 (note the concentration on discussion of punctuation, for example). Part (b) does satisfy some of the Level 5 criteria: at times ‘good and secure’ points are made. Connective phrases such as ‘on the other hand’ suggest that the candidate is making a real attempt to construct a structured argument (which is, nevertheless, clearly not an ‘excellent’ one).

Overall, therefore, the responses in this pair of answers satisfy some of the criteria of Level 5 but only at a ‘borderline’ level: 21.
(a) Discuss the passage from Act 3 Scene 4, exploring Shakespeare’s use of language and its dramatic effects. [15]

(b) ‘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. [15]
atmosphere withheld in the scene. The face of the scene is important due to the fact that Hamlet is accusing Gertrude of a highly punishable crime. During the period, regicide was one of the most tragic worst crimes to commit, so it is important that Shakespeare establishes a quick pace to the scene as Gertrude is accusing Gertrude of a very serious crime.

Finally, Shakespeare uses similarities within the scene in order to express Gertrude’s wrong doing. For example, the fact that Hamlet describes Gertrude’s action as “false as diars’ oaths” imply that her helping Claudius kill the king was wrong. This similarity displays a dramatic effect as it expresses Hamlet’s hatred towards Gertrude’s actions.

To conclude, Shakespeare uses a range of similarities, adjectives and alters the form of the dialogue in order to intensify the situation.
Plan:

1. Talk about how Hamlet is certain his father was murdered by Claudius.
   "One may smile, and smile, and be a villain."

2. Hamlet's certainty is almost proved: "This be madness, yet there is method in it" - Goethe, "/The Drama of Christianity"

3.

Answer:

It is clear from an audience's perspective that Hamlet is almost certain about his every action, even his madness seems devised.

During the play, Hamlet explains how "one may smile and smile and be a villain." This suggests the fact that he is certain that Claudius murdered his father and how he is the true villain.
The way Hamlet explains "smite and slay" connotes how he believes that Claudius is equally putting on a front to cover up his murder. James I. Calderwood's interpretation of Verducci's presence contradicts the concept of how Hamlet's decisions act the play as a whole is certain. His view explores how nothing in Hamlet is truly certain and that there are multiple viewpoints for everything, including Hamlet's supposedly derived madness which ultimately results in his downfall.

At one point within the play, Polonius explains how Hamlet's "madness" has "nothing in it". This implies the fact that Hamlet's madness is a front in order to deceive the other characters. Furthermore, conveying the fact that his plan is for certain. However, one assuming within the play, it is argued that Hamlet's Madness seems genuine from the way he murders Polonius, who is hidden behind a certain faux. This act provides us with the impression that Hamlet's insanity isn't a front. Van Goethe's
EXAMINER COMMENTARY

Overall this pair of answers conveys a sense of competence in response to the tasks set – although it is clear that there is no scope for the mark for this Section to move into a higher mark Level. Some lapses of expression affect both parts of the task (“Shakespeare uses similies within the scene in order to emphasise Gertrudes wrong doing”) and the extent of the part (b) answer is restrained by its rather succinct approach. The latter response is moderately successful though in its citing of specific critical views (“Van Goethe” and “James L. Calderwood”).

These are competent (rather than clear, good) responses: Level 4: 18.
(a) Discuss the passage from Act 3 Scene 4, exploring Shakespeare's use of language and its dramatic effects. 

(b) ‘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.

Script 7: Level 4
Also in this extract Shakespeare uses opposites to make his point. He describes something that she should be positive about: cordial, her "grace and blush ...wise...innocent" and claims that she doesn't have any of these qualities, her grace is a "blow", her ways a "hypocrite" and instead of innocent love she has a "busier" there. This negative spin on what were desired qualities of women at the time makes Shakespeare's point even more poignant as it forces the positive nature to become more conscious to an audience. Shakespeare uses this when Hamlet is talking about Claudius being able to "smile and smile yet be a villain". Here the contrasting ideas of evil and smiling puts Claudius in a very dark light because as the character we have to villains smiling (ie that they have won their battle).

Much of the sound is significantly different to the 'sh' sound that the 's' sound create. Contrast each other "rash and bloody", here the 'sh' sound is significantly different to the 'b' that comes directly after. Contrasts will then allow the actors to exaggerate the words in any way he/she desires thus allowing different messages to be given to the audience. For example, the actress playing the Queen, could say them in such a way that makes her sound shocked or in a way that makes her sound disgusted.
Hamlet is a very morally decisive man, he knows what is morally accepted and what would not be yet he seems very conflicted in his internal argument. Whether to kill Claudius and clean up what is “rotten in the state of Denmark” or to let him live. Shakespeare uses ideas of fate and morality to inform and alter both Hamlet’s certainty of evil and his impulsive desperation to kill his father’s murderer.

Hamlet is presented with the perfect opportunity to kill Claudius when he is in prayer, his back is turned and he is preoccupied and doesn’t even notice Hamlet is behind him, however Hamlet hesitates. This hesitation argues against the above statement because it is his uncertainty that causes him to lose out on a perfect moment for murder. This uncertainty, which saves him from damnation for killing a man during prayer, makes it easier for him to be stopped by the immorality of what he is doing. Hamlet recognises that if Claudius died in prayer, he could be received in heaven and instead wants Claudius to suffer for his crimes. This reflects beliefs in the afterlife established in the Jacobean era and also commenting on the notion of an omnibenevolent God who forgives all sins, including murder which Hamlet...
Is obviously against.

Shakespeare believes he was born to take revenge on his father and this could explain why Hamlet is uncertain about how and when to kill him as he wants the moment to be without fault. It seems Hamlet is uncertain whether it is "necessary in the mind to suffer" or "take arms against a sea of troubles." Revenge in Shakespeare's time was seen as something that one did out of loyalty to their family and in this situation, Hamlet doesn't know if it is more moral to let Claudius live or to fight against him to avenge his father. By "taking arms against a sea of troubles" (i.e. Claudius) Hamlet would be doing as his father wished but again, go against the law and God. Again, his uncertainty is what saves him yet again, he is failing to act impulsively.

Hamlet's madness could be argued to be his downfall, causing him to act impulsively towards the end of the play and thus leading to his demise. However, many critics have been successful in their arguments against Hamlet's insanity. For example, he seems to feign spurs of madness and have moments where he is totally aware of his behaviour, "though this be madness yet there is method in't." This proves that Hamlet's downfall lies not in his impulsiveness but his madness is a well thought out craft.
EXAMINER COMMENTARY

There are signs of some competence in this pair of responses to Hamlet. The essay (b) answer is more successful than the context (a) response. The response to the set passage makes some attempt to use analytical methods and effects of language, form and structure are addressed. This is achieved without a sense of overall competence though (for example in the discussion of the relationship between the use of iambic pentameter and dramatic effect). There are lapses in the quality of written communication apparent in this answer. In the essay question there is some competent sense of an argument developing and interpretative views do emerge (eg. in the context of ‘the Jacobean era’) although the overall effect is not ‘good’.

The ‘borderline’ mark is appropriate for this answer: Level 4: 16.
(a) Discuss the passage from Act 3 Scene 4, exploring Shakespeare’s use of language and its dramatic effects. [15]

(b) ‘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. [15]
being hidden from something. So to be put with the word ‘bust’er’ you think pain, scar, hurt, it creates a negative image in your head, which leads to a dramatic effect on the audience as we realise flammers anger and pain like the blister.

Hamlet has spoken to a ghost and owed straight in to the destruction of his uncle. In the end so many people owe to Hamlet’s impulsive nature and need for revenge. He is so driven to avenge his father’s death, he hasn’t thought of the consequences.

However some critics would argue that Hamlet’s uncertainty at the beginning has driven him down the path of destruction. With the uncertainty of the ghost and not fully understanding what it is trying to say. Not believing it so they feel that as Hamlet didn’t do anything when he found out he took it all on himself. It lead to his later destruction.

But on the other hand in Act 3 Scene 4 when Hamlet kills Polonius without seeing who was behind the curtain he did it impulsively. Hamlet hasn’t thought about anything other than the destruction of Claudius. “Is it the king?” this demonstrates the goal that he is so driven by impulse and anger that he can’t even think straight.
EXAMINER COMMENTARY

These responses are rather brief (very short in the case of part (b)) and not always ‘competent’ in their attempts to address the play, the questions and the requirements of the relevant Assessment Objectives. The tone throughout the responses in this Section is often informal or colloquial and – on occasion – is inappropriate to enable the candidate to express sophisticated ideas about a complex text: “Queen Gertrude doesn’t seem hugely bothered”; “Hamlet … has dived straight in”; “…he can’t even think straight”. Although discussion is ‘limited’ at times (in both parts of the Section) there is evidence that ‘some attempt’ has been made by the candidate to address the questions and the AOs.

The ‘borderline’ mark at the bottom of Level 3 indicates that some attempt is being made here but that aspects of the answers are ‘limited’: 11.
SECTION 2 DRAMA AND POETRY PRE-1900
QUESTION 7

‘Love is invariably possessive.’

Script 9: Ibsen and Rossetti - Level 5

Ibsen & Rossetti adopt the key themes of love & possession & explore them through each of their works. In "A Doll’s House" Ibsen presents the love between the 2 main characters Torvald & Nora to be just an extension of their husband & therefore, a possession. Comparatively, Rossetti explores her difficulties in experience of love between men & religion, conveying the possessive hold men could have over women through poems such as "Twice" but also how women can potentially break free & this possession through rejection, as presented in "No Than You John". However, Rossetti still devotes her life to religion, as carrying the interpretation of religion having...
a hold over her & therefore she is now religion's possession. This reveals how impossible it was for women to escape this idea of possession that was so embedded in 1800's society not just in England but across Europe.

During the 1800's it was a traditional expectation, across Europe, that women were to cater for the needs of the main male figure in their life, typically either their father or husband. In order to successfully achieve this ideal, supportive women, the women population were expected to give up any goal or integrity of their own, they were purely an extension of their husband, aiding them with their career, caring for their children & taking on their opinions. This theme of the sacrificial role of women is evident in both Ibsen’s & Bassett’s works. For instance, through the character of Nora, Ibsen creates a woman who is totally reliant on her husband, & one that supports & cares for him, as conveyed through her entire reasoning behind her debt being to take Torvald to Italy to help his health improve. This is the ideal woman, even though she is flawed through having to cause debt, the reasoning behind her actions were still morally correct ones for a wife in that present society. However, by Act 3, Ibsen has developed Nora’s character to be one that has self-discovered, realising how fake her life has been, she was first “papa’s doll child” (Act 3) & simply remained to be a “doll wife” for Torvald. This chosen symbol of a doll by Ibsen conveys how “perfect” a life people were expected to lead by society, however it is imposs
to achieve this perfection as revealed through Nora’s key lines of dialogue: picking her family into debt, just as it is equally impossible for people to look be like a boy doll.

The theme of the sacrificial role of Rossetti reveals how women were sublimated through her poem “Twice” and “No Thank You, Señor”. “Twice” is used to compare her experiences with the physical love of a man & spiritual love. Men are depicted to be cold & cruel with a critical eye you scanned.” (2nd stanza of “Twice”) the repeated “e” sounds emphasise this lack of empathy & care. Furthermore, once a man rejects her love, the narrator loses all of her drive for life, “Not questioned... Not cared... not sung” therefore implying the whole purpose of a woman’s life was to marry & sustain a successful marriage & to have no other goal. In the eyes of society this was true, if a woman failed to marry by the time she was 30 she was socially outcast, revealing the oppressive encouragement of society ideals on women.

The theme of marriage is also present throughout each work. Ibsen presents with the only marriage in the entire play to be a pretence, there is no real love there. Torvald & Nora are simply fulfilling the ideals of society as they have been brought up to do so. This is symbolised again through the recurring motif of a doll, to achieve this perfection a person had to sacrifice their true emotions & lead this fake & unfulfilling life that Ibsen creates Nora & Torvald’s life to be. * & marriage

In Act 3 Nora states “we have never sat down & talked about Serious Matters.”
The fact that this way of life was simply accepted is reflected through the beginning of Act 2 when the Nurse simply states: "But I had to". In response to Nora's question "How could you give up your own children?". Due to the suppressive & patriarchal society, people were just followed & fulfilled the expectations of their peers for fear of being socially outcast.

In comparison, Rossetti's love for religion is real & true. She has been reborn & is experiencing a whole new zest for life, as expressed in "A Birthday", "the birthday of my life, my love is come to me". The use of "birthday" reflects her new found life with religion. However, the fact that Rossetti is still devoted her life to religion as conveyed through the marriage vows in "Twice". "All that I am I give" could be interpreted as religion having a hold over her & moreover she has willingly become religion's possession. This reveals how there is no escape for the women in Yeats & Rossetti's society from this idea of possession & women having to be an extension of something. Society will never let them become truly independent. The power of suppression within society has embeded this goal in women of having to become owned by someone or something. Rossetti & her work on " Twice" is a perfect example of this. Through religion she had sought she had freed herself from the traditional & entraping ideas of society when the reality was she had simply fulfilled the expectation set in a different way, uncovering the harsh truth that there was never a true escape from society's possession for women.
EXAMINER COMMENTARY

This is an answer dominated by the virtues of approaching the terms of the question directly and of focusing effectively on the dominant Assessment Objectives. There are no clear signs of 'excellence' in the response but – throughout the answer – the candidate has made a 'good' and 'clear' attempt to consider the issues raised in the essay's title in terms of contextual issues (AO3 – dominant): “…so embedded in 1800's society…”, “…during the 1800s it was a traditional expectation…”, “…if a woman failed to marry by the time she was 30….” Some minor lapses in the quality of written expression do not hold back the effect of the essay significantly.

This good, clear answer meets all the requirements of Level 5 in the middle of the range: 23.
‘Love is invariably possessive.’

Script 10: Webster and Tennyson - Level 5

The theme of love is a key theme in both texts, especially in Tennyson’s ‘Maud: A Manuscript’, which was written at the tail end of the romantic period so had the characteristic ‘big themes’ such as love. The theme of love often overlaps with the theme of possession due to the time periods in which both texts were written in, with women seen to be in the possession of a man. Both texts explore these themes and show how one can be possessive with love and also possess possession by love.

It is interesting that both texts are named after the main female character in the play / poem, which perhaps indicates that they are under somebody’s possession. Both texts have the theme of possessive brothers. In ‘Maud’ Tennyson’s poem Maud is ‘forbidden to speak to her friend of the years past’ by her brother due to past family feuds and in order to maintain the family wealth and power, he does not want her to marry somebody of a lower strata. This is very similar to the Duchess in ‘The Duchess of Malfi’ who is told by her brother that she must only marry to “adorn honour”. This is very reflective of the attitudes towards women in those time periods, particularly for Tennyson, writing in the Victorian era when women were seen to belong to the male members of the family if she did not have a husband. While the Duchess defies her brother’s wishes in the clandestine marriage to her steward, Mendoz, which perhaps echoes...
Relationship between Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, Maud does not deny her brother and is also perhaps under her own possession of love for her brother as she “cannot but love him” even though she is “niet blind to the faults and at his heart and mind”. In this way, both poets explore the possessive love of family and in Tennyson’s case, Maud’s love for her brother even though she knows it is not healthy reflects that of abusive relationships.

This leads me onto my next point that the persona in “Maud” is possessed by his love for Maud. A big theme in Tennyson’s poem is the cynical view of the world and society, which is reflective of the romantic period themes, but the persona’s love for Maud, or the potential relationship between them makes one question whether love makes the world “not so bitter and her smile could make it sweet.” In this way, his possession by love is a good thing in changing his view on the world. However, his love for Maud drove him insane and he is completely possessed by it. He begins to believe she is sending him secret signal letters to her garden by sending a rose down the “Rimulet”. This idea of solipsism is also a key theme idea is the romantic and Victorian era. Tennyson’s idea of breaking into description of Maud’s enclosed garden alludes to the Song of Solomon which described Mary’s name as a garden. An interpretation of the breaking into her garden in “Maud” is that it is a kind of metaphysical rape. It had also been compared to the illicit exploration and then jumping into the garden at Satan in “Paradise Lost”. This shows how love can be possessive and completely
take over you making you do irrational and mad things.

This idea of insanity coming from the possessive nature of love is also displayed through Ferdinand in Webster's play. Ferdinand's love for his sister is often viewed as incestuous, further emphasising the way he possessed her. He threatens her with his "father's pigment", which can be interpreted as a phallic symbol, as well as the patriarchal power over women in the time period. Ferdinand's spiral act of control and into madness can be viewed as coming from the betrayal he feels at the sister he loved. These themes of madness and strange erotic scenes are typical of the Jacobean revenge tragedy and can also be seen in other plays such as "The Sirens" in which a sister becomes pregnant with her brother's child.

Webster was writing under the rule of King James I who introduced regulations that women were not allowed to marry below them socially. This was all during the time of the birth of capitalism and people could now rise up in society by other means such as merit and bribery. This made many people anxious and this idea is perhaps reflected in Webster's play.
EXAMINER COMMENTARY

This highly competent answer is preceded by a lengthy plan. Aspects of the answer suggest a 'good' response to the question, the set texts, and the requirements of the relevant Assessment Objectives. There are contextual references in the answer to both Twelfth Night and Paradise Lost. A tendency to narrate (at times) rather than analyse is one of the factors preventing the answer from moving more comfortably into the Level 5 mark range. Both the expression of ideas and employment of contextual material are – at times – less than precise: “This idea of solopsism is a key idea in the romantic and Victorian era”.

Ultimately this response meets some Level 5 criteria but the appropriate mark is that on the ‘borderline’ with the level below: 21.
QUESTION 9

‘Men may seem to be more powerful than women, but the reality is very different.’

Script 11: Ibsen and Rossetti – Level 6

Henrik Ibsen far investigates the reality in gender difference in power between genders. He presents men as having more power however bases this power on the presence of women. He shows how use ambiguous ending and juxtaposition to show that despite men having more physical and social power, women have emotional and moral superiority. Rossetti uses religious connotations to show how men are not more powerful than women as the only one claiming divine being have a greater power of humankind. She does also show how men are more powerful however the question she shows how she ever showing how she would not agree with the statement.

In 'Goblin Market' Christina Rossetti presents women as both weak and empowered. The poem is structured. Rossetti was a devout Anglican Christian who's later works often investigated the conflict between those who believed in the eternal love of God. In contrast, she was also heavily influenced by the Pre-Raphaelite movement due to her brother Dante's keen participation in the group. The movement fowed challenged the traditions of the Renaissance and focused on the visual and aesthetic pleasure of art. They portrayed the world with maximum realism and often focused on religion and feminine beauty. These are both themes strongly associated with 'Goblin Market' as well as the conflict between divine material pleasures and eternal spiritual eternal pleasure in Heaven. This conflict was often discussed in Rossetti's works as she was interested in the theme of 'Goblin Market' is that women are susceptible to temptation and lust. They are sinful and have a sexual appetite. This would be deemed as unacceptable.
in Victorian society. A woman was either chaste or promiscuous and the use of Lizzie and Laura's juxtaposition of Lizzie and Laura can be viewed as an example of this. Laura was tempted and gave in to desire and lust whereas Lizzie was virtuous and was not lead into sin. Rossetti does challenge the binary structure of expiations of women. It is clear that Lizzie is virtuous through her selfless act done to save her sister however she does not remain pure and virginal. The visual violent sexual violence presented through vivid imagery shown suggests that Lizzie, despite sacrificed her own chastity for Laura's desire. The silver penny may represent a pure purity yet she is still violent abused. This presents a conflict as the reader cannot condemn Lizzie yet she is virtuous actions yet she is no longer pure. This could be Rossetti's way of challenging the male view of women. Having volunteered at a home for fallen women Rossetti would have had first hand experience with women accused of impurity who had not lost their virtue. The challenge is never the less Rossetti still presents women as weak through Laura's actions.

An alternative interpretation of the poem is that of religious enlightenment representation. Laura has been said to represent human fallen humanity whilst Lizzie is a figure of Christ who purges humanity of sin through self sacrifice. The decision to make the symbols women shows how Rossetti is presenting divine power action as being above the patriarchal structure of society. This provides evidence to agree with the statement to challenge the statement as
It suggests there neither gender is more powerful as God and religion holds ultimate power. Females are therefore just as able to reach divine enlightenment as men. Both were created equal.

Henrik Ibsen does not use religion to challenge the patriarchal society however does use simmetry use enlightenment to show how women are not of a lower status to men. Ibsen uses juxtaposition to show the contrast of this change by crafting the character of Nora with two personalities. At the exposition of the play she is presented as infantile with Torvald using childish affectionate pet names such as 'sunny bird' and 'squawle'. When patronised and called a 'spendthrift' she retaliates with laughter and whining. This compares starkly with her response at patronisation in the climax of the play. Torvald insists that as a woman she is inferior that she use the wrong means and that she should be so grateful that he can help her. Instead of an infantile response she is Ibsen writes only short retorts which juxtapose greatly with the monologues given by Torvald. When Nora finally exclaims this used for dramatic effect as when Nora retorts that she is not first and foremost a wife and mother as society dictates but that she has made the revelation that she is a 'first and foremost a human being' the impact is greater on the audience. The use of 'human being' is evidence that Ibsen is not presenting Nora as mere powerful but instead on equal to men. Unlike in Rossetti's Goblin Market she does not prove her worth by saving another. She instead saves herself. Women were expected to be wives and mothers as
dictated by Tuvaal which lead to criticism of the play. It would have been unheard of for a woman to leave her duties as a wife as it was so difficult to make a living without support of a man. Therefore critics accuse the play of being unrealistic yet this is the primary way in which Ibsen criticises society for its rigid treatment of women.

From the *Antigone* is another poem which can be compared with *A Doll's House* to present the power of men over women. The speaker writes about the life of a woman, 'a duty, blank in a woman's lot', which presents how Rossetti believes that life is a painful struggle yet to be a woman is to be so much more so. Ibsen also shows how women struggle against the power of men through using the bank as a symbol for wealth. The males in the play, Krogstad and Tuvaal earn wages and a status from it whilst Nora is oppressed and can't sign for herself for a loan. This represents how women are certainly not more powerful than men as they are restricted from access to money and therefore must rely on men to live. Both Naa and the speaker have lost faith in the world. The speaker favours oblivion to life. This can be linked to Rossetti's view on life as a painful torment after her fight with her husband's disease left her wanting release to heaven. Similarly Naa has lost faith 'I don't believe in miracles anymore' which shows how both writers believe that for a woman there is no hope under the unrelenting power of men.
EXAMINER COMMENTARY

This essay is preceded by a substantial plan. After a straightforward introduction to the topic, the candidate soon launches into an effectively structured response in which consideration of contextual matters is always present (at least implicitly – “It would have been unheard of for a woman…”). Once again the candidate displays a lively, personal response to the set texts and to the terms of the question. Comparison of the respective texts is often sustained at an excellent level throughout the response (“Unlike in…”; “Both Rossetti and Ibsen…”).

Although not without some faults, this is an ‘excellent’ answer overall: Level 6: 27.
‘Men may seem to be more powerful than women, but the reality is very different.’

Script 12: Webster and Tennyson - Level 6

Both “The Duchess of Malfi” and “Maud” explore power and gender, albeit in very different ways. In “Maud,” there is a little sense that Maud has any agency at all – she is a mere puppet of the wishes of the persona and her brother. Although the Duchess’ brothers do seek to control her in “The Duchess of Malfi,” Webster portrays her as a woman with much more power than Tennyson’s portrayed of Maud has.

Throughout “Maud,” there is little to suggest that men in the poem are more powerful than women Maud is very passive in her relationship with the persona – for example, when he kisses her hand she “took the kiss sedately.” Moreover, at no point in the poem do we see Maud actively accept or reject the persona’s advances, suggesting that she is entirely passive.

An interpretation of Maud’s passivity could be that it reflects Victorian society’s ideal woman. A model Victorian woman was expected to be meek and passive. Tennyson’s presentation of Maud is “faultless,” and we see this through the persona’s description of her as “faultless.” It could be argued that Maud’s position as the ideal woman does in fact give her power over men, as they needed all this...
to be with Maud. However, it could also be said that men desire to be with Maud in a relationship following Victorian norms - a controlling, patriarchal relationship where the woman is expected to do little. This is further supported by the power exerted by Maud’s brother over her. For example, it is “her brother’s acceptance” that would determine whether Maud marries the “new-made lord” or not and we are also told that Maud’s brother forbids her to speak to the person shaming her level of control and power he has over Maud.

In “The Duchess of Malfi”, Webster also uses controlling brothers to explore power and gender. Unlike “Maud”, however, Webster presents the Duchess as a powerful woman in her own rights who leads to rebel against her brother’s attempts to control her. We see this most obviously in Act I. After Ferdinand and The Cardinal tell her not to remarry, the Duchess says “If all my royal kindred lay in my way under this marriage, I’d make them my low foot-steps.” This shows the Duchess actively denying her brother, and when taken in conjunction with the political power she hides as the Duchess of Malfi, it could even be interpreted that initially in “The Duchess of Malfi”, women seem to be just as powerful as men.

The portrayal of the Duchess as a
strong, independent woman and ruler is rare in
Saxon times, but not unprecedented. At the
time Webster was writing, James I had just
succeeded Elizabeth I, who herself was a strong
ruler who remained unmarried. In terms of
literary precedent, the Duchess is, by no
means the first strong female character—there
are others from before Webster’s time, such as
Beatrice in Shakespeare’s “Much Ado About
Nothing.” Relatable to a
contemporary audience, the Duchess would
have therefore seemed unusual, but not wildly so.

Another interpretation, however, is that
the reality in “The Duchess of Malfi” is
that ultimately the Duchess is just as
powerless in comparison to men as Maud is.
Although initially the Duchess defies her
brother, she is ultimately discovered
and imprisoned by Ferdinand and then
executed. When imprisoned, the Duchess acts
more similarly to Maud, as she passively accepts
Ferdinand’s attempts to drive her mad and
her eventual execution, even telling her
executioners to “pull hard.” It could even be
said that Webster uses the unorthodox
structure of the play to highlight her
lack of power, despite being the titular
character, she dies helplessly through, and
the rest of the play concerns itself with
the men who surrounded her. Similarly,
in “Maud,” Maud herself only appears in
Part I, and the poem itself could
be said to be more about the
room.
his views of Maud than about Maud herself.

Another character, Webster uses to explore
cower and gender is Julia. To a contemporary
audience, Julia would have seemed to be
immoral due to her affair with the Cardinal
and her short affair with Beoda. However,
on the surface, she also seems to be paradoxical
in comparison with the men. The Cardinal
is able to control her in their relationship,
and we see this highlighted when he tells Julia that
for women, a man might strive to make gain -
unlike her, he should make them fixed.

This is effectively the Cardinal reminding
Julia that, as a woman, she is unable to be as constant or as trustworthy as a man.

However, a feminist reading of the play would
suggest that Julia is simply using her
sexuality to gain any power she can. Through
her affair with the Cardinal, she is able
to gain material possessions such as Adonis'
carded, which she would otherwise not have
gained. Indeed, she certainly seems more powerful than
than her husband, the bumbling and unaware Constantine.

Contextually, Webster and Tennyson present
women in very different ways. Where the
Duchess is unusual for her age, and more
Maud is the ideal Victorian woman in her
pasivity. It could even be argued that
Tennyson deliberately chooses to play up
Maud's passivity and femininity - although much
of Victorian society was patriarchal movements
such as the Suffragettes were emerging, which
saw women looking to gain power but there is no acknowledgement of this in “Maud”. Another interpretation of this could be that Maud’s passivity is due to the semi-biographical nature of the poem. Much like the person in “Maud” Tennyson fell in love with a woman of higher social standing = Rosa Baring but never approached her. This could be used to argue that Maud is therefore an idealised version of Rosa Baring and her passivity is due to Tennyson’s own lack of interaction with Baring.

Overall “Maud” and “The Duchess of Melfi” do not support the stereotype that men may seem to be more powerful than women, but the reality is very different. The Duchess arguably is the opposite – although she may seem powerful on the surface, ultimately her brothers are more powerful in contrast to Maud who reflects Victorian ideals of a woman with very little power and role, and so neither title. Although Julia is more powerful than she initially seems, it would seem to be a stretch of the imagination to say that she is more powerful than men (with the exception of Casimiro), Tennyson’s portrayal of Maud is a reflection of both Victorian ideals and his own experience with Rosa Baring, resulting in Maud being portrayed as a women with practically no power at all.

EXAMINER COMMENTARY

This is a perceptive, subtle and wide-ranging response to the question. There is clear sophistication in evidence here and some of the points made are indeed excellent. The candidate has focused impressively on the relevant Assessment Objectives throughout and the answer has been constructed in such a way that it presents a coherent and detailed argument. There is – inevitably – room for further improvement and so the answer ultimately gains a mark comfortably into (but not at the top of) the Level 6 range. It is notable that the response synthesises comparison, context and critical awareness into an impressive whole. The answer is not without errors of expression.

This is an answer of clear ‘excellence’: Level 6: 27.
‘Men may seem to be more powerful than women, but the reality is very different.’

Script 13: Ibsen and Rossetti – Level 5

The statement describes how men hold a superior position in society, especially during the Victorian era when Rossetti wrote her poems. Women were educated in a significantly different way in that instead of drawing out intellectual thinking and creativity, middle classed women focused on skills that would benefit marriage such as singing, dancing and sewing and even walking posture in order to prepare them for marriage. The term “blue-stocking” was used to describe women who attempted to pursue intellectual studies and were often outcasted by society and the race of “superior men”. Rossetti is what we would call a “feminist” in modern times as her poems usually consist of a female speaker attempting to overpower the men. On the other hand Ibsen attempts to pioneer the idea of modernity of plays whilst staying true to the Norwegian perceptions in his time, similar to Victorian England perceptions, it is often seen that women should focus on the household letting men handle important matters.

The women in Ibsen’s *Doll’s House* should not be perceived to be weak. For example, although not a developed character, the Helmers nanny Anne-Marie can be seen powerful enough to sacrifice her own daughters upbringing as she was “obliged to if [she] was going to be little Nora’s nurse”. Anne-Marie is used by Ibsen to represent qualities that Nora lacks the evident self sacrifice in order to be “little Nora’s nurse”. Mothers were often seen as self sacrificing due to the time spent to bring up their children. Similarly Mrs Linde can be seen as a “powerful woman” as she was able to prioritise her family over her own interests, by leaving Krogstad for a richer suitor to ensure her own families needs are fulfilled. Her dedication to her family meant that she felt “it was not justified to refuse his offer” this meant that even though there were males in her family, the fact that there was an “offer” to be accepted meant that it was a woman who possessed the power to the family. On the otherhand, Rossetti also presents some of her female characters as weak. For example, in “Goblin Market”, the girls Lizzie and Laura are often described to be “maidens” this was referring to the virginities of the girls this is derived from the term “maidens” from Victorian times which was used to describe a women who kept their virginity. The goblins are Rossetti’s interpretation of men and how they used “fruit-calls” to lure the girls. The climax of the poem describes how laura was “maul’d and claw’d”, the scene alludes to that of a rape scene by using shortened words such as “maul’d”, Rossetti is able to describe how men are dangerous and that the “fruit-calls” makes women attracted and addicted. The poem was written at a time when Rossetti stayed in a home which took care of “fallen women”, the term was used to describe women who lost their virginities before marriage, one of the taboo’s of Victorian times.

Women were often objectified during the times of both writers, this meant that the women were too weak to go against their husband or to possess the courage to stand up to the societal norm at the time. For example, Ibsen consistently allows Torvald to call his wife “skylark”, “songbird” or “squirrel”, the playful tone often used when these terms are said contributes to the idea that women are similar to pets in that they are kept in cages, a metaphor used to describe how women were kept at home. Torvald even goes to the point of describing Nora as his “prized possession”
comparing her to other materialistic items he owns. Similarly, some of the women in Rossetti’s works are often objectified such as the speaker in “Twice” where she is described “with a critical eye you scanned, then he set down” and “as you set it down it broke”. The “it” Rossetti refers to is the heart of a woman and how easily it is broken from rejection, this shows how weak women were perceived as the time. From the start of the poem, the speaker is perceived to be weak from the fact that she had to hide her announcement “(O my love)” . The use of parenthesis when compared to the final stanza where she is able to openly announce “O my God” suggests her fear of persuading her own relationships as arranged marriages were common in Victorian society. However, the absence of the parenthesis suggests that in a religious society she is able to state her love of God as it was socially acceptable.

Rossetti often grants her female speakers power over the men in her poems. For example, in “No, thank you, John”, the last line of the poem reflects the title where the speaker is able to reject the advances of man. The use of “no” shows one of the few situations where a female is able to decline an offer or command from a man, as such she is “holding the power” over the man. Similarly the presumably female speaker in “Winter my secret” is seen to be powerful in the presence of a man as she refuses to tell the male inquirer her “secret” as “the secrets [her’s] and [she] wont tell”. By denying the man of her “secret” she is able to control the situation purely from the man’s curiosity. Similarly, a secret is used by Nora in A Doll’s House in form of letters and the "IOU" the statement suggests how women can be seen as powerful, in this case Nora was able to save her husband’s life by breaking the law and “forging a signature” of her father. Nora was also powerful enough to endure keeping all of it secret as “it would upset [their] mutual relations altogether” this form of self-sacrifice shows that she is a powerful woman but her reluctance to take care of her own children allows others to view her as weak.

**EXAMINER COMMENTARY**

This answer makes even more ‘good’ points than its Section 1 equivalents. Clarity is achieved to a substantial degree on occasion. There is a notable element of positive individual engagement with the chosen texts and their critical issues, and the candidate’s tone is often lively and engaged. Structure is perhaps the least successful aspect of the response even if – for the most part – the answer is adequately well-structured and shows a clear line of development. The candidate recognises the importance of context in this part of the paper (here it is the dominant Assessment Objective) and frequent interesting observations (“…the Norwegian perceptions in his time, similar to Victorian England perception…”) contribute to some success in this area.

Substantial good, clear points are made throughout this answer: Level 5: 24.
‘Men may seem to be more powerful than women, but the reality is very different.’

Script 14: Webster and Tennyson - Level 4

...
is also drawing on the irony of a man of such religious importance profiting from personal gain, and many critics have commented on such irony through postmodern interpretation:

In ‘Meroe’ it is also evident that men are individuals of authority, given that Meroe’s brother, like his landlord, is driven by power. The narrator indicates his political importance through the nicknames given, for example, he is referred to as ‘darkly deep’, and he, ‘Stilton’, these both reflect his character, power and political importance. This may also be a comment on class structure and inequality. The 21st century neocolonialist interpretation of Meroe suggests that Tennyson is drawing on the comparison within the nobility given that costs of arms can merely be purchased to elevate one’s social status. This further indicates Meroe’s brother’s power and also reflects Tennyson’s own life seeing as he was surrounded by his inheritance by his brother, who can be seen in his character.

Moreover, the person’s father in ‘Meroe’ may one support the view that men seem more powerful. The person describes how the family made it on their own. This contrasts with Tennyson’s own life, wherein his grandfather made a great deal of money through hard work himself. This therefore further he plot of a poem and also demonstrates men being more powerful within literature.

However, to another extent, this statement is a valid one given that women. American women, for of the women within such literature seem just as, if not more, powerful than men. The Duchess, for example, is portrayed by Miss Salinger as a strong, powerful and independent woman. Even when introduced, she is the person that the woman comes across such as in her proposal to Arden. This is illustrated in the 19th century postmodern.
interpretation of the play, wherein critics have suggested that women are the dominant gender and the text also
remains with tragic overtones. Alternatively, Lucas has suggested in his 17th century argument that interpretation of the play that the Druce is much like Webster, in that they are both powerful characters surrounded by madness. The narrative emphasises the Druce's power in Webster's text and suggests that there are comparisons between her character and Ham in reality.

Furthermore, Maud may also be portrayed as a powerful individual. Her power is immediately evident as she prawns her common on her high status. Status and social hierarchy are common themes in Shakespeare's poems as he draws comparisons between the narrator's life and his. In this case, his persona is low born although in love with a girl well above his social class. Maud may represent 'Rosy Boring', adjusting to a girl who otherwise had an unhealthy obsession. This relationship was however unattainable given that she was not more powerful. This theme of the 20th century modernist interpretation, which links the text with a feminist view of the novel, that present Maud as a feminine, powerful figure. This therefore supports the statement of seeing as women seem more powerful than men in such literature.

Overall, I believe that Maud's statement is valid to an extent; 'man seem to be more powerful than women, but as reading is very different.' As this may be argued because both the Druce and Maud can be viewed as powerful and authoritative figures, which supports modernist and post modern interpretation wherein the female is depicted seems to be born dominant, 'as a ruler and a lover.' However, it can also be argued that men are in fact more powerful.
EXAMINER COMMENTARY

This is a response of mixed success which demonstrates clear personal engagement with the set texts and – at times – a lively critical approach to the topic. It is not without fault though – both on specific matters (Freudian criticism is placed in the eighteenth century; Augustan in the seventeenth) and also in its broader tendency to approach the subject from a critical perspective (AO5) rather than from the contextual direction (AO3) which should be dominant in this section of the paper. There are also some minor errors in expression apparent throughout the answer. Some significant lapses in the approach and detail of this answer prevent it from gaining a final mark in the Level 5 (good) category.

This is an answer of clear competence – in the middle of the Level 4 range: 19.
Rossetti’s poetry often challenges the theme of gender and power. In her poem Tuncii, it is just implied that the man holds a lot of power over the female speaker. The speaker states how ‘you took my heart in your hand’ and that ‘it broke’. The phrase ‘heart in your hand’ suggests that the speaker’s lover was in full control over the speaker’s feeling. He could destroy or damage her ‘heart’ or he could reassure and love it. When we learn that ‘it broke’, the speaker can learn how the man ‘broke’ her women’s heart by rejecting her and not having her. This presents the speaker lover as being more powerful than the speaker who is a woman. The word ‘took’ suggests that the poem almost suggests that perhaps the woman didn’t ask for her ‘heart’ to be given up to a man, but that this exchange was his idea. The word ‘broke’ highlights the vulnerability and fragility of the speaker, once again presenting her as being weaker and less powerful than the man. However, Rossetti, in the later stanzas of the poem, presents the speaker as not having more power over the situation and the man, despite the previous belief of the reader. The speaker offers her heart to God, after the man breaks it, asking ‘Oh my Lord, will you rejoice with fire (her heart)? The word...
'reign' presents how the female speaker is taking power over the situation, by asking God to remove the impurity of her heart caused by a man. The word 'şyρν' symbolises God's passion and gives the power. Here we can clearly see how despite the initial suggestion that the speaker is less powerful than a man, the reality is very different. The speaker makes a decision to leave the heart behind and ask God to make her better again. This decision to not be defined by the heart a man caused on her demonstrates her power to turn her life around.

Similarly, Henrik Ibsen's play 'A Doll's House' contradicts the popular belief that men have power over women. In an opening scene of the play, Ibsen shows how Nora has gained power over her husband Torvald through deceiving him. Initially, it seems that Torvald owns all the power in the relationship. When Nora comes back from shopping, he asks her to spend the money recklessly. However, she implies that Torvald views Nora as being less powerful than him. The word 'little' implies that Torvald views Nora as being less powerful than him. The word 'recklessly' suggests that Nora is incapable of being trusted to responsibly use money; once again, this is a childlike remark and suggests Torvald thinks more power than her.
However, despite this initial suggestion, if we look underneath the surface it is clear that Nora has in fact got power over Torvald. She assures him, I would not go against your wishes. This statement is suggestive she is obedient to Torvald’s instructions. However, the soft spoken tone of his line is in fact used to manipulate Torvald. By being polite and timid, Torvald is oblivious to Nora’s true nature. She manipulates Torvald by playing up to his feminine, gentle nature he thinks he has but then instead does what she wishes anyway. Torvald questions her about buying sweet but she lies and say she hasn’t. However she eats them when he doesn’t realise. Therefore, Nora is using the belief that women have no power to actually gain more power than her husband.

Additionally, at the end of the novel, we can see this power Nora has when she decides to leave her husband and the family home. She states that Torvald has been controlling her and making her his ‘doll wife’. The word ‘doll’ has connotations with children’s toys, suggesting that Torvald viewed Nora as immature and used her how he wished without considering her feelings as a person. However, despite this suggesting Torvald’s power over Nora, it becomes clear when she leaves that Torvald in fact depends and relies on Nora much more than the audience originally thought. Torvald asks ‘may I write to you? someday?’
The word ‘May’ presents Torvald asking Nora for permission to do something, the role has reversed and Nora holds the power.

Rossetti also presents women as having power over men in ‘No Thank you, John’. The poem is a declaration of independence through the speaker’s rejection of a marriage proposal. We learn that the speaker states ‘I never said I love you, John in the opening line of the first stanza. The word ‘never’ is certain and definite, suggesting the speaker had power over the situation through her unflinching decision to reject the proposal. She asks him why he won’t leave her alone ‘day by day’. This phrase suggests that the inferred other character is extremely persistent and somewhat intimidating, they won’t take no for an answer. This suggests a power struggle between the speaker and her admirer, John. The speaker says in the fifth stanza ‘I’d rather say no to a thousand John’s than say yes to you’. We can infer from the harsh aggression and mockery of this phrase that this is not the first time the speaker has been proposed to by ‘John’. Despite being intimidated by John’s persistence and submitting to the power of the man, the speaker gains power over him by constantly rejecting him. This presents the speaker as being more powerful than the man. In Rossetti’s younger years, she was proposed to by many men, including a man called
John, but rejected his offer as he didn’t hold the same religious beliefs as her. In the Victorian era, women had very little power. However, she did have the power of proposal. This was one of a rare time in which a man’s actions were dependant on a woman’s decision.

Contrasting, Rossetti’s well known poem ‘Goblin Market’ seems to suggest that men have a much more powerful than women. Some critics believe that the fruit in the poem represent desire and that the Goblins are symbolic of men, tempting women to give in to their desire. The ‘Goblins’ are described as ‘fire-like’ in the poem. ‘Fire’ has connotations with danger and pain, suggesting that Lizzie and Laura should not give in to the temptation they feel. They remind themselves that they ‘must not look at goblin men’ and ‘must not keep their fruit’. The repetition of the words ‘must not’ is intended by Rossetti to present the Lizzies and Laura’s strict values and belief about the restrictions they’ve set for themselves. They are entirely aware of the dangers of ‘goblin’ men. Rossetti herself worked in a home for two fallen women, and saw first hand the treatment of women who had had sex before marriage. They became outcasts from society and were viewed as ‘unclean’. It seems that Lizzie and Laura are trying to do all they can to not become fallen women for the
repurcussions caused by the societal norms of the time. This suggests how men have power over women; women are defined by whether or not they are pure and good, and a man can take this away from them. Despite her efforts, Laura goes into temptation and visits the Goblin men, addopring fear as rare aspear, 'falling' for her. The word 'dropped' is similar to 'fallen', implying that Laura's purity and innocence is gone. The phrase 'word pearl' also has connotations with wealth, beauty and innocence. Therefore, the phrase suggests that after visiting the Goblin men, Laura's purity, innocence and many other desirable factors have fallen from her. The phrase here, Rosetti is presenting how the Goblin men had complete power over the women. They caused them to give in to their desires and lose the ability to protect her innocence. This directly corresponds with Victorian society, in which women would be locked down upon for having sex before marriage whilst men would not be shamed for the same actions. Not only does this poem highlight the inequality of Victorian society, but also the complete power men seem to have over women; not their feelings, purity, or reputation in society.
EXAMINER COMMENTARY

Some competent points are made in this substantial answer. It is not, however, obviously ‘good’ or ‘clear’ in its approach. Some attempt is made to approach contextual issues but this tends to be done in general terms: “In the Victorian era, women had very little power.” At times the answer is unfortunately dominated by minor lapses of expression. The approach to comparison in the answer tends not to be one of attempted synthesis but instead the candidate generally approaches first one text and then the other in order to attempt to make comparative points. This is a straightforward and competent answer.

Signs of some competence in the answer mean that a mark in Level 4 is appropriate: 17.
QUESTION 12

‘Rank and social status are enemies of happiness.’

Script 16: Ibsen and Rossetti – Level 5

12) ‘Rank and social status are enemies of happiness’.

Contrary to the late 19th century, the impact of patriarchal society appeared to be very significant on the role of women and family. In Ibsen’s ‘A Doll’s House’, the role of Torvald Helmer as the man does not support the patriarchal arrangement. The idea that ‘rank and social status are enemies of happiness’ as regards himself and his career, yet the impact on his wife Nora does support the statement. In many of Rossetti’s poems, she makes reference to the crushing impact on women that social and societal expectations have, particularly in the poems “Shut Out” and “No Thank you John”.

The portrayal of Helmer in “A Doll’s House” appears to be that of the predictable Victorian ideals. These are known as the bourgeois ideals that include a family’s good reputation, free from financial and social issues or the appearance of and the maintenance of honour. Helmer appears to strive for all of these, which is particularly suggested at the end of the play, after he uncovers Nora’s secret debt to Krogstad. He begins with anger at Nora and then proceeds to exclaim: “This must be hushed up”, and directs blame towards Nora, who took out the loan to save his life, yet Helmer’s immediate concern over the well-being for his reputation rather than that of his wife, makes it clear to Nora and that he is not the man she perceived him to be. What Helmer values most in Rossetti’s poem “Shut Out”, she explores the crushing effects that the ideas of patriarchal society had on women, such as they do on Nora in “A Doll’s House”.

The protagonist in “Shut Out” describes “a shadowy figure that keeps the gate”, which arguably can be suggested as Rossetti’s interpretation of men, dividing society and protecting the ‘gate’ that shuts women out. In contrast, the protagonist attempts to plead with the patriarchal (shadowy) figure, whereas in “A Doll’s House”, Nora attempts to
break the barrier and make something of herself and in doing so exposes her husbands true identity, the true meaning of the male dominated society - control.

Victorian ideology suggests that an individual and that of their family's honour must be maintained at all costs. This is implied through the character of Kroghdal in “A Doll’s House” - although he attempts to destroy the Helmer family's reputation, he is doing so in order to provide some form of future and reputation for himself and his family. Arguably, this is hardly honourable but doesn’t make of interpretation of Torvald Helmer and more positive than our interpretation of Kroghdal at the end of the play. When Helmer is informed that Kroghdal will take no further action and withdraws his writs he states, “I’m saved... oh, you too of course.” - but by then it is too late. The damage has already been done, Nora realises that her marriage has been based off of a lie, that she convinced herself that she loved Torvald because it is all she ever knew. In this sense the Helmer family ‘rank and social status’ really are the ‘enemies of happiness’.

On the other hand for Nora as an individual the realisation that Torvald cares more for social status and rank frees her. Torvald states: “No man should be expected to sacrifice their honour for the woman they love” to which Nora replies: “Women have been doing it for centuries.” Nora now sees that Torvald will not make sacrifices for her as she would for him, so becomes the more powerful individual and leaves him to pursue some form of happiness for herself. Rossetti also portrays empowered women in poems such as “Maudle Clare” and “No. Thank You John”. For example “I never said I loved you John” - to an extent defies Victorian expectations to find as husband. Yet, the reader is unsure of what form of future we can expect for Nora, so
There is a very strong focus on the requirements of the question and of the relevant Assessment Objectives. The candidate constructs an impressive answer which engages with context (AO3 – dominant) right from the start: “Contextually, throughout the late 1800s – 1900s, the impact of patriarchal society…”. This approach is maintained throughout and the level of comparative analysis is always sustained, good and clear. The answer is marred at times by slips in expression (“idealogy”). These need to be taken into account although they do not significantly diminish the overall effect of the answer.

This answer is often very good and clear in its approach and effect: Level 5: 24.
Rank and social status are enemies of happiness.

In 'The Duchess of Malfi' by John Webster, the Duchess is in fact the person of the highest status in the play. This is notable as it was uncommon for women to hold such high status and influence in Jacobean times. It is only the fact that she is a widow that allows her to keep her power as if she were married then the husband would become the overseer of the household. Whilst her high rank does grant her some independence her status as a woman in society means that in many senses she must defer to her brother, Ferdinand, and the Cardinal. As her father is dead the brothers must take responsibility for their sister as was the convention at the time of writing the play. The Duchess therefore is an interesting character as although her high position in society grants her independence and happiness her social status as a woman and the involvement of her brothers takes this away. In the play, this is most evidently seen when it comes to the Duchess having to choose a new husband. While the brother choose Count Malatesta, a man of suitable status, the Duchess takes matters into her own hands marrying Antonio, a man who

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below her rank, but someone she has feelings for. She notes the troubles of courtly love as a woman of high rank saying "we are forced to use as more elaborate wording" while it may be argued that the Duchess should have informed her brothers to find her a husband. The strength of her character and her determination means that this was never likely. It is this decision and the secrecy behind it that leads to many of the events in the play and argued to her death. The "insults of the Duchess" and Antonio towards both characters' happiness throughout the play and both social status.

Similarly in "Maud" by Tennyson we see how rank and social status impede on the relationship between Maud and the Narrator. Much like the Duchess, Maud is of high status with an absent father and a controllably brother. The brother seeks to use Maud as more of a political pawn than a family member. He finds a suitable match for her in the "very unsuitable match" and makes his intentions clear.

In both the Jacobean and Victorian era, it was commonplace for women to marry to be part of a social alliance. An alliance through love. Like Felix and Iseult seek to wed the Duchess to Count Malatesta, the brother seeks to find an alliance with the lord though Maud, if the Duchess and Maud were women of a lower rank then it would be unlikely that they would be used in this way as contextually they would be less valuable. Maud has
no say in who she marries and although she is a rather silent figure in the text, it is clear that she doesn’t want to marry the "newly made Lord". The narrator is also affected by this, he is of a lower status and so although he loves Mad, cannot openly court her. He shows disdain for the brother and is excluded from many high society events including the dinner the brother uses to attract all men of high status. Here due to his rank and social status as an outcast, the narrator is denied the one thing that would make him truly happy, Macht. Rank and social status do not only affect love however, Class is a major theme in both texts and there are many different attitudes towards it. Whilst Ferdinand seeks to delight in the power gained from his status telling people they might "laugh when I laugh" Basola recalls at the mere thought of it. He refers to the courtiers as "horse kites" and "jewels" and seems to go out of his way to maintain a low status. He recognised and advocates the idea that "rank and social status are enemies of happiness". He is content to serve Ferdinand as a spy and try Duchess in his household but does not maintain an appearance of flattery. He speaks his mine and minds those around him even calling one woman an "abortive hedgehog". However, even as Basola rejects court life and disregards status he is not happy. He is an outcast and the archetypal Witwold of Jacobean drama, almost narrator of the play whilst maintaining...
a distance from the characters. The points about others’ habits and their existence as a low status ex-convict. The recognition of the problems of society does not bring him happiness.

The narrator in Maud features similar world views; he separates himself from a range of higher rank and judges those below him. He comments on the people in the village, assuming that their main objective in life is to gain status. He is hated by the higher classes as more justifiable as it is implied that money problems caused by Maud’s father led to the death of the narrator’s father. This mirrors the events of Tennyson’s life in which his family were effectively disowned by wealthy relatives. Tennyson’s attitude for the higher classes is clear in the poem. It seems as though in both texts a recognition of the inherent problems within society and a disregard for rank and social status do not lead to happiness. Whilst class doesn’t play as big a role in society in modern times the texts must be read in the context of writing where rank and social status were unchangeable elements of society and could not be ignored. Although Borisov and the narrator show deeper understanding of society than any other characters they are also the unhappy characters in both texts. Arguably the only happy character in the texts is Maud’s brother who has a clear place in society, a large influence over other people and a sister he can use to secure him an alliance. Ferdinand is least affected by
This is a good, clear response to the question. Although there is a tendency in the answer (at times) to narrate plot elements, there is also a clear intention to address the terms of the question and to meet the requirements of all the relevant Assessment Objectives. Clarity is in evidence throughout the answer (with 'clear' being a key term in the Level 5 marking guidelines). The expression of ideas is accurate and clear without being faultless. If contextual, comparative and critical ideas are at times lacking in penetrating subtlety then they are at least always clear and secure. The comparative statement "in both the Jacobean and Victorian eras…" is perhaps typical of the approach evident in this answer.

The answer deserves a mark solidly in the centre of the Level 5 range: 23.
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