Please check the examination details below before entering your candidate information

Candidate surname	Other names

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

Centre Number | | | | | |

Candidate Number | | | | |

Thursday 21 May 2020

Morning (Time: 1 hour 30 minutes) | Paper Reference **4ET1/02**

English Literature

Paper 2: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts

You must have:
Question Booklet (enclosed)

Total Marks

Instructions

- Use **black** ink or ball-point pen.
- **Fill in the boxes** at the top of this page with your name, centre number and candidate number.
- Answer **ONE** question from each section.
- Answer the questions in the spaces provided
  – *there may be more space than you need.*

Information

- The total mark for this paper is 60.
- The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets
  – *use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question.*
- Copies of the *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology* may **not** be brought into the examination.
- Dictionaries may **not** be used in this examination.
- Clean copies of your set texts may be taken into the examination.

Advice

- Read each question carefully before you start to answer it.
- Check your answers if you have time at the end.

Turn over ▶

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SECTION A: Modern Drama

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number:

Question 1 ☒	**Question 2** ☒	**Question 3** ☒
Question 4 ☒	**Question 5** ☒	**Question 6** ☒
Question 7 ☒	**Question 8** ☒	**Question 9** ☒
Question 10 ☒		

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SECTION B: Literary Heritage Texts

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number:

Question 11 ☒	**Question 12** ☒	**Question 13** ☒
Question 14 ☒	**Question 15** ☒	**Question 16** ☒
Question 17 ☒	**Question 18** ☒	**Question 19** ☒
Question 20 ☒	**Question 21** ☒	**Question 22** ☒

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TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 30 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 60 MARKS

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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

Thursday 21 May 2020

Morning (Time: 1 hour 30 minutes) | Paper Reference **4ET1/02**

English Literature

Paper 2: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts

Question Booklet

Do not return this booklet with your Answer Booklet.
Clean copies of your set texts may be taken into the examination.

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Answer TWO questions:

Answer ONE question from Section A and ONE question from Section B.

SECTION A: Modern Drama	**Page**
A View from the Bridge, Arthur Miller	4
An Inspector Calls, J B Priestley	4
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time, Mark Haddon (adapted by Simon Stephens)	5
Kindertransport, Diane Samuels	5
Death and the King's Horseman, Wole Soyinka	6
SECTION B: Literary Heritage Texts	
Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare	7
Macbeth, William Shakespeare	7
The Merchant of Venice, William Shakespeare	8
Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen	8
Great Expectations, Charles Dickens	9
The Scarlet Letter, Nathaniel Hawthorne	9

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SECTION A: Modern Drama

Answer ONE question on ONE text from this section.

You should spend 45 minutes on your chosen question.

***A View from the Bridge*, Arthur Miller**

EITHER

1 How does Miller present the character of Marco in the play?

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 1 = 30 marks)

OR

2 Explore the theme of jealousy in *A View from the Bridge*.

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 2 = 30 marks)

***An Inspector Calls*, J B Priestley**

EITHER

3 Sheila Birling: 'The point is, you don't seem to have learnt anything.'

To what extent are lessons learnt in *An Inspector Calls*?

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 3 = 30 marks)

OR

4 How does Priestley present the relationship between Mr Arthur Birling and Eric Birling in the play?

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 4 = 30 marks)

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***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, Mark Haddon**
(adapted by Simon Stephens)

EITHER

5 Christopher: 'I was brave and wrote a book and that means I can do anything.'

Discuss the theme of overcoming difficulties in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*.

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 5 = 30 marks)

OR

6 Explore the relationship between Judy Boone and Roger Shears in the play.

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 6 = 30 marks)

***Kindertransport*, Diane Samuels**

EITHER

7 How are mothers presented in *Kindertransport*?

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 7 = 30 marks)

OR

8 Explore the idea of starting a new life in the play.

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 8 = 30 marks)

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***Death and the King's Horseman*, Wole Soyinka**

EITHER

9 Explore the theme of influence in *Death and the King's Horseman*.

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 9 = 30 marks)

OR

10 Which character do you sympathise with in the play and why?

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 10 = 30 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 30 MARKS

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SECTION B: Literary Heritage Texts

Answer ONE question on ONE text from this section.

You should spend 45 minutes on your chosen question.

***Romeo and Juliet*, William Shakespeare**

EITHER

11 'Tybalt and Mercutio are very similar characters in *Romeo and Juliet*.'

How far do you agree with this view?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 11 = 30 marks)

OR

12 Mercutio: 'A plague o' both your houses!'

Explore the idea of blame in the play.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 12 = 30 marks)

***Macbeth*, William Shakespeare**

EITHER

13 Discuss the theme of appearance and reality in *Macbeth*.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 13 = 30 marks)

OR

14 'Lady Macbeth is presented as a powerful character in the play.'

How far do you agree with this view?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 14 = 30 marks)

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***The Merchant of Venice*, William Shakespeare**

EITHER

15 In what ways is money important in *The Merchant of Venice*?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 15 = 30 marks)

OR

16 Jessica: '…ashamed to be my father's child.'

How does Shakespeare present the character of Jessica in the play?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 16 = 30 marks)

***Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen**

EITHER

17 'Elizabeth and Jane are presented as very different characters in the novel.'

How far do you agree with this statement?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 17 = 30 marks)

OR

18 Explore the significance of the title, *Pride and Prejudice*.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 18 = 30 marks)

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***Great Expectations*, Charles Dickens**

EITHER

19 How does Dickens present the relationship between Joe and Mrs Joe in the novel?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 19 = 30 marks)

OR

20 Explore the importance of wealth in *Great Expectations*.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 20 = 30 marks)

***The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne**

EITHER

21 'Adultery and witchcraft were considered crimes at the time.'

Explore the theme of crime in *The Scarlet Letter*.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 21 = 30 marks)

OR

22 How does Arthur Dimmesdale change as the novel progresses?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 22 = 30 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 30 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 60 MARKS

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Surname	StemUp Model Solution
Answer booklet	Write the question number in the left-hand margin at the start of each answer.

Question number

1

Miller presents Marco as a man of few words and great strength whose silence holds a fierce moral code. At first he seems the ideal guest, grateful, hard-working and self-effacing, yet as the play goes on he becomes Eddie's true opponent: the man who embodies the very Sicilian idea of honour that Eddie claims to live by. In this sense Marco is less a rounded individual than a dramatic force, the instrument through which Eddie's betrayal is finally punished.

Miller's first description of Marco sets up this tension. The stage directions call him "suspicious, tender, and quiet-voiced", a list that holds watchfulness and gentleness together, and on entering the Carbone home he approaches Eddie with a "certain stiffness". This physical reserve suggests a proud man who finds it uncomfortable to depend on another man's charity. His first speeches are formal and deferential: "I want to tell you now, Eddie" is followed by the promise "when you say go, we will go". The simple, balanced phrasing shows that Marco understands the hierarchy of the house and accepts Eddie as its head. His motives are entirely selfless. He has come to earn money for his wife and children, one of whom is sick, and his quiet talk of sending money home makes him sympathetic from the start. For an audience, Marco represents the dignity of the illegal immigrant, the "submarine" who risks everything for his family, and this makes Eddie's later betrayal all the more shocking.

Miller also lets other characters build Marco's image. On the docks he is "a regular bull", a metaphor that captures his raw physical power, while the companion phrase "a regular slave" hints at how hard he works for so little reward. Marco himself rarely boasts; his strength is shown rather than spoken. This makes the

Question number

end of Act One so dramatically effective. After Eddie uses a boxing lesson as an excuse to punch Rodolpho, Marco silently challenges Eddie to lift a chair by one leg. Eddie fails, and Marco raises it above his head "like a weapon", turning what might look like a glare of warning into "a smile of triumph". The simile reveals a man who protects his brother without a single threat, and the wordless confrontation works as a warning to Eddie and to the audience. Placing this moment at the curtain of the first act is a structural choice: the tension between the two men is now open, and the audience senses that Marco will be the one to end things.

In Act Two Marco's restraint finally breaks. When the immigration officers arrive, he realises at once who has informed, and his public accusation is shocking because it comes from a man who has said so little. He spits in Eddie's face, and his cry "That one! He killed my children!" uses hyperbole that is, from his point of view, literal truth: without his wages, his family may starve. The demonstrative "That one" singles Eddie out in front of the whole neighbourhood, destroying the "name" that Eddie values above everything. Marco's view of justice is absolute: "In my country he would be dead now. He would not live this long." The short declaratives sound like a verdict rather than a threat.

His scene with Alfieri shows the deepest side of the character. Asked to promise that he will not harm Eddie so that he can be bailed, Marco cannot understand a law that protects the betrayer. His line "All the law is not in a book" sums up the clash between American legal justice and an older, natural justice based on honour and blood. Here Marco mirrors Alfieri's opening speech about Sicilian justice, and the audience may feel some sympathy with him, even as they dread what he will do. Rodolpho has to persuade him to give his word, and the fact that Marco agrees so reluctantly prepares us for the climax.

Question number

At the end, Marco's single command, "Animal! You go on your knees to me!", strips Eddie of human status and demands public submission. It is Eddie, though, who pulls the knife, and Marco turns it back on him, so Eddie is in effect destroyed by his own weapon. Structurally, Marco is the catalyst of the tragedy: Eddie's jealousy of Rodolpho drives the betrayal, but it is Marco's code that turns that betrayal into death.

Ultimately, Miller presents Marco as admirable but not simply heroic. He is loyal, honest and brave, yet his refusal to "settle for half", in Alfieri's phrase, makes him as uncompromising as Eddie. Perhaps that is Miller's point: the two men are opposed, but both are ruled by honour, and that shared code makes the tragedy inevitable.

2 In A View from the Bridge, Miller presents jealousy as the destructive force at the heart of the tragedy. Eddie Carbone's jealousy of Rodolpho, rooted in a love for Catherine that he can never admit, becomes his tragic flaw and drives him to betray his own community. Yet jealousy in the play is not only Eddie's: Beatrice feels it too, and Miller contrasts her honest, painful jealousy with Eddie's, which is hidden even from himself.

From the opening scenes, Miller shows Eddie's possessiveness disguised as fatherly concern. When Catherine appears in a new skirt, he complains that she is "walkin' wavy" and adds "I don't like the looks they're giving you". The colloquial phrasing makes him sound like a protective uncle, but his anxiety about how other men look at her suggests something more troubling. Alfieri's narration warns the audience directly. In his first meeting with Eddie he senses that "there is too much love",

Question number

and the adverb "too" is crucial: love that should be harmless has become excessive and dangerous. Because Alfieri speaks with hindsight, like a chorus in Greek tragedy, the audience watches Eddie's jealousy grow knowing that it will end in disaster.

The arrival of Marco and Rodolpho is the turning point. Rodolpho's singing, his cooking and his blond hair give Eddie a way to attack him without naming his real feeling. Eddie repeatedly insists that "the guy ain't right", a vague phrase that lets him mock Rodolpho's masculinity while avoiding the truth that he is jealous of a rival for Catherine. When Rodolpho sings "Paper Doll" and Catherine is clearly enchanted, Eddie stops the song, and Miller's stage directions show how deeply he is disturbed: "his face puffed with trouble". The image is physical, almost swollen, as if jealousy were a sickness he cannot hide. Similarly, when he notices Catherine is wearing high heels for Rodolpho, he demands she take them off, using his authority to cut off her growing independence.

Miller uses physical action to express what Eddie cannot say. In the boxing lesson, Eddie's punch at Rodolpho is presented as a game but is really an act of jealous aggression. Later, returning home drunk and finding the young couple coming out of the bedroom, he kisses Catherine on the mouth and then kisses Rodolpho. The double kiss is shocking: the first exposes his desire, and the second is a crude attempt to "prove" that Rodolpho is not a real man. Here jealousy reaches the point where words fail and violence takes over, and the audience can no longer pretend that Eddie's feelings are innocent.

Beatrice's jealousy is presented very differently. She knows that her husband's attention has shifted to Catherine, and her question "When am I gonna be a wife again, Eddie?" is painfully direct. She tells him "it's been six months" without

Question number

intimacy, a plain statement of loss. Unlike Eddie, she directs her jealousy towards fixing the problem, encouraging Catherine to grow up and reminding Eddie that "The girl is gonna be eighteen years old". Her jealousy becomes a kind of wisdom, and at the climax she voices the truth no one else dares to say: "You want somethin' else, Eddie, and you can never have her!" The exclamation finally names Eddie's secret aloud, and his horrified response shows that he has never allowed himself to recognise it.

Structurally, jealousy pushes the play towards its tragic end. Unable to stop Catherine marrying Rodolpho by persuasion, Eddie consults Alfieri, hoping the law will help him; when Alfieri tells him there is nothing he can do, Eddie makes the anonymous phone call to the Immigration Bureau. Miller presents this as the moment when jealousy overrides every other loyalty, since the play has already shown, through the story of Vinny Bolzano, how the community despises an informer. Betrayal leads to Marco's public accusation, the loss of Eddie's "name", and finally his death on his own knife.

Alfieri's closing speech gives the audience a final view of Eddie. He admits that Eddie allowed himself "to be wholly known", and he concludes that it is better "to settle for half". This suggests that Eddie's jealousy grew from a refusal to accept limits. Miller's tragedy is that jealousy does not make Eddie evil so much as blind: he destroys everything he loves rather than face what he feels.

3 Priestley presents learning as the real test of every character in An Inspector Calls. The Inspector arrives to teach a lesson about collective responsibility, but by the final act only Sheila and Eric have truly absorbed it; Mr and Mrs Birling and Gerald learn only how to protect themselves. Sheila's accusation, "you don't seem

Question number

to have learnt anything", therefore captures Priestley's central concern: lessons are learnt only to a limited extent within the play, and the play's structure suggests that the audience must succeed where the Birlings fail.

At the start, Priestley establishes Mr Birling as a man who believes he has nothing to learn. His speeches to Gerald and Eric are full of confident predictions, and he dismisses the idea of "community and all that nonsense", insisting that a man must "mind his own business and look after himself and his own". The dramatic irony of his certainty about the Titanic being "unsinkable" makes him look foolish to the audience, so we are prepared to distrust everything he says. The Inspector's entrance immediately interrupts this speech, a structural signal that Birling's philosophy is about to be challenged.

Sheila is the clearest example of a character who learns. When she realises her jealous complaint got Eva sacked from Milwards, she is genuinely distressed and, unlike her father, accepts her share of the blame at once. Priestley shows her growing insight as she begins to understand the Inspector's method before the others do, warning her mother not to "build up a kind of wall" between themselves and the girl. The metaphor of the wall suggests the class barriers and self-deception the Birlings use to avoid responsibility, and Sheila is the first to see through them. By Act Three her language has gained authority: "You began to learn something. And you've stopped now." The two short sentences, one about the past and one about the present, show her frustration that her parents' moral progress was only temporary.

Eric, too, is changed. He confesses his drunken treatment of Eva and the stolen money, and in the final act he refuses to let the family pretend: "It's still the same rotten story whether it's been told to a police inspector or to somebody else."

Question number

The adjective "rotten" shows his disgust, and his point is moral rather than legal: what matters is what they did, not who the Inspector was. Priestley presents the younger generation as open to change, reversing the usual hierarchy so that the children speak with more maturity than their parents.

By contrast, Mrs Birling resists learning throughout. She remains cold to the end, declaring "I accept no blame for it at all", the absolute "at all" closing off any possibility of reflection. Priestley uses dramatic irony brilliantly when she condemns the father of Eva's child, unaware that it is her own son, so that her confident judgements become her own trap. Even after this, she dismisses Sheila and Eric as "over-tired" and predicts that in the morning they will be "as amused as we are".

Gerald's position is more complex. His account of his affair with Daisy Renton shows some genuine feeling, and he leaves to walk the streets. Yet it is Gerald who returns with the news that there may be no Inspector Goole, and he quickly assumes that "Everything's all right now", offering Sheila the ring again. The simple sentence reveals how easily he wants to return to normal; his learning was emotional but shallow. Mr Birling is similar. Once he believes the scandal can be avoided, he says "the whole thing's different now", and the stage direction that he is "Amused" when Sheila insists on her change shows that, for him, reputation matters more than morality.

The Inspector's final speech is Priestley's lesson in its purest form. "We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other." The collective pronoun "we" includes the audience, and the warning that if men do not learn this lesson they will be taught it "in fire and blood and anguish" uses a triple of violent nouns that sounds almost biblical. For a 1945 audience who had lived through two world

Question number

wars, the threat would have seemed fulfilled, which makes the Birlings' refusal to learn even more damning.

The play's cyclical ending tests the characters once more. The final phone call announcing that a girl has just died and that a police inspector is on his way forces the family to face the same lesson again, as if Priestley is suggesting that those who refuse to learn are doomed to repeat it. Overall, lessons are learnt only partially: Sheila and Eric change, but the older generation does not. Priestley's real target, therefore, is the audience, who are left with the choice that the Birlings failed to make.

4 Priestley presents the relationship between Arthur Birling and his son Eric as distant, strained and ultimately broken. On the surface they are a prosperous father and his heir, but beneath the celebration lies a lack of trust and understanding that the Inspector's visit exposes. By the end of the play, the power in the relationship has shifted: Eric, once dismissed as a foolish boy, judges his father, and Birling is left defending a reputation rather than a son.

The opening stage directions immediately suggest the gap between them. Birling is described as a "heavy-looking, rather portentous man", confident in his status, while Eric is "not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive". The balanced phrase "half shy, half assertive" captures a young man caught between deference to his father and a desire to speak for himself. During the dinner, Eric's sudden guffaw and his awkward interruptions show that he does not share the family's smugness, and Birling's response is impatience. When Eric asks "What about war?" during the after-dinner speech, Birling brushes him aside, telling him to let him finish and that he has a lot to learn. The audience, aware of the dramatic irony of Birling's

Question number

predictions, may already suspect that it is the father, not the son, who has most to learn.

Birling's preference for Gerald also reveals the weakness of his bond with Eric. He confides his hopes of a knighthood to Gerald, treating him as an equal and a business ally, while Eric is talked over and corrected. Priestley suggests that Birling values Gerald because he represents the social advancement Birling wants, whereas his own son is merely a disappointment.

The Inspector's questioning about Eva Smith's sacking gives Eric his first open challenge. "Why shouldn't they try for higher wages? We try for the highest possible prices." The rhetorical question and the parallel structure expose the hypocrisy of Birling's capitalism, using his own logic against him. Birling's irritation suggests that he sees disagreement as disloyalty, and that in his household a son is expected to agree rather than think.

Act Three brings the relationship to crisis. When Eric's affair with Eva and the theft from the firm are revealed, Birling's first reaction is not concern for his son but anger at the threat to his name. His question "Why didn't you come to me when you found yourself in this mess?" might seem fatherly, but Eric's reply is devastating: "Because you're not the kind of father a chap could go to when he's in trouble." The phrase "the kind of father" reduces Birling to a type, and the plain, colloquial "chap" makes the accusation sound bitterly ordinary, as if this is simply what Birling has always been. Birling then tells Eric, in a stage direction marked "angrily", that "You're the one I blame for this", which ironically reveals how little he has listened to the Inspector's message about shared responsibility. He cares most about covering up the stolen money and the scandal.

Question number

As the play ends, Eric grows more confident and refuses to be silenced. The stage directions show him "shouting" at his parents as they try to pretend nothing has happened, and his line "I don't give a damn now whether I stay here or not" is short and abrupt, signalling that he no longer depends on his father's approval or money. His final judgement, "I'm ashamed of you as well", turns the language of shame back on the parent who has spent the evening ashamed of him. Birling, meanwhile, mocks the "famous younger generation who know it all", showing that he cannot accept that his son might be morally right.

Through this relationship Priestley dramatises a wider conflict between generations. Birling represents an older, selfish individualism that refuses to change, while Eric, despite his serious failings, is capable of remorse and growth. The breakdown of their relationship is never repaired, and the final phone call leaves them facing the truth together but still divided. Priestley seems to suggest that hope lies with the son, not the father, and that a society built on Birling's values will produce sons who cannot trust their fathers.

5

Stephens presents overcoming difficulties as the driving force of The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time. The play follows Christopher as he faces a world that overwhelms his senses and confuses his logic, and his journey becomes a kind of bildungsroman in which a boy who will not go beyond the end of his road ends by travelling to London alone. Yet Stephens does not present this as a simple triumph: the adults around him also struggle with their own difficulties, and the play's final question leaves the audience unsure how far anyone can truly "do anything".

From the opening, Stephens dramatises the difficulties Christopher faces.

Question number

Discovering Wellington dead, he is questioned by a policeman, and when the officer touches him he hits him. Christopher's literal-minded honesty and his inability to bear physical contact show how a world built on social rules can turn an innocent boy into a suspect. The investigation into Wellington's death is his first real challenge. To solve it, he must talk to neighbours he does not know, and Stephens makes this both comic and moving: Christopher's blunt questions to Mrs Alexander show courage, because speaking to strangers is something he finds frightening. The detective story structure gives his struggle a clear purpose, and each interview becomes a small victory.

The biggest difficulty arises when Christopher discovers his mother's letters and Ed's confession, "I killed Wellington". Stephens shows the effect physically: Christopher groans and curls up on the floor, and the audience sees how betrayal shatters his trust. His decision to go to London is presented as both terrifying and heroic. The journey in the second half is staged with sound, light and movement: the ensemble become crowds, announcements and trains, so that the audience shares Christopher's sensory overload. The stage direction "He approaches an information counter" is a simple moment, yet in the context of his fear of strangers, it becomes a significant achievement. His counting, his maths problems and his reliance on Toby help him survive, suggesting that he overcomes difficulties not by becoming "normal" but by using his own methods. The most dangerous moment, when he climbs down onto the Tube line to rescue Toby, shows how far he will go, and how vulnerable he still is.

Christopher also overcomes intellectual and institutional difficulties. His determination to sit A Level Maths, though the school doubts him, shows him resisting other people's low expectations. Ed's blunt response when the school says it lacks the facilities, "Then get the facilities", is a short imperative that shows a

Question number

father fighting for his son. In the end Christopher sits the exam and achieves the top grade, and Stephens even adds a coda in which he explains a maths problem to the audience, a playful structural choice that lets Christopher take ownership of the stage.

Stephens shows that the adults have their own difficulties to overcome. Judy admits in her letters that she could not cope with Christopher's behaviour, and her decision to leave London and return to Swindon to look after him marks her facing what she once ran away from. Ed's challenge is perhaps harder. Having lied about Judy's death and killed the dog, he must rebuild trust from nothing. He gives Christopher a puppy and promises to earn his trust step by step, through a project of small tasks, an approach that speaks Christopher's language of rules and logic. Their reconciliation is incomplete, but Stephens presents it as hopeful.

The play's metatheatrical form reinforces the theme. Siobhan reads from Christopher's book and suggests turning it into a play, so the drama we watch is itself one of Christopher's achievements. Writing becomes a way of ordering a chaotic world, and the Siobhan scenes act as a calm frame around the turmoil of the action.

The ending crystallises the theme. Christopher lists his achievements, linking them with the repeated conjunction "and" and the first person "I": he went to London, solved the mystery and found his mother, and "I was brave and wrote a book and that means I can do anything." The cumulative structure builds pride and momentum. Yet he then asks Siobhan whether that really means he can do anything, and the question is left unanswered. This open ending is both moving and honest: Christopher has overcome enormous difficulties, but Stephens refuses to pretend that the world will now be easy. The audience is left to admire his

Question number

courage while recognising that his struggle, like everyone's, will continue.

6 Stephens presents the relationship between Judy Boone and Roger Shears as one born of escape rather than lasting love. For most of the play it is hidden from Christopher, and the audience learns of it gradually through gossip, letters and finally direct confrontation. When it is at last shown on stage, it proves fragile, and it collapses under the very pressure that created it: the difficulty of caring for Christopher. In this way the relationship acts as a mirror of Judy's own conflict between her desire for a different life and her love for her son.

At first, the relationship exists only as an absence. Ed tells Christopher that his mother has died, after earlier saying that she is in hospital and that he will not be seeing her "for a while". The lie conceals Judy's departure with Roger, and Ed's fury at any mention of him shows the damage it has done: when Christopher suggests that Mr Shears might have killed Wellington, Ed shouts "I will not have that man's name mentioned in my house". The stage direction and the possessive "my house" reveal a wounded pride, and the refusal to say Roger's name makes him a shadowy, almost forbidden figure. Mrs Alexander finally reveals the truth through careful understatement: Judy and Roger were "very good friends. Very, very good friends". The repetition of "very" is comic in its delicacy, but it also shows how a child is the last to know what the adults all understand.

Stephens develops the relationship through Judy's letters, which Christopher finds hidden in Ed's bedroom. These letters are spoken aloud by Judy on stage, so her voice fills the space even though she is absent from Christopher's life. She explains how she could not cope with his behaviour and admits "And that was when I started spending lots of time with Roger". Beginning the sentence with "And" links

Question number

her relationship directly to the exhaustion of her marriage and motherhood, as if Roger was a consequence of her struggle rather than a free choice. She writes that "we realised that we were in love", and the phrasing presents love as something discovered almost by accident. Earlier, Christopher remembers her fantasy of a farmhouse in the South of France with "someone called Jean", which suggests a romantic, restless side to Judy that Roger seemed to satisfy for a while. Small details in the letters also hint at an imbalance: she mentions that he has bought their new flat, adding in brackets that "he only rented the other one". The flat belongs to him, and the bracketed aside, though casual, suggests that Judy's new life depends on Roger's money and goodwill.

When Christopher arrives in London, Stephens shows the relationship under strain. Roger is irritated by the sudden presence of a boy who cannot bear to be touched and who has very particular needs about food and routine. Judy is torn between protecting her son and keeping her partner happy, and their exchanges become sharp and tense. The audience sees that Roger is not openly supportive, and that Judy has to become angry to defend Christopher's needs. The flat at 451c Chapter Road, the address Christopher has followed all the way from Swindon, becomes a cramped and hostile space.

The breakdown comes when Roger, drunk, confronts Christopher at night. The stage direction "He grabs at Christopher" makes the threat physical and shocking, and Judy's intervention marks the end of her loyalty to Roger. Her repeated apology, "Christopher, I'm sorry. I'm really, really sorry", echoes the "very, very" of Mrs Alexander and suggests that she is apologising not only for Roger but for her own choices. Soon after, she leaves Roger and returns to Swindon with Christopher so that he can sit his A Level.

Question number

Structurally, the affair leaves two marriages destroyed, Judy's with Ed and Roger's with Eileen Shears, and two abandoned partners who later turn to each other, so that its damage spreads through the whole community of the play. Roger and Judy's relationship begins with the hope of escape, but it shows that Judy cannot escape responsibility for her son. Stephens seems to suggest that love between adults is fragile when it is built on running away, while the more difficult love between parent and child is what finally endures.

7 Samuels presents mothers in Kindertransport as figures of love and loss, whose attempts to protect their daughters often wound them instead. Through three mothers, Helga, Lil and Evelyn, the play explores how motherhood is shaped by history: Helga must give up her child to save her, Lil must raise a child who is not her own, and Evelyn, damaged by separation, struggles to love her own daughter openly. Samuels's interweaving of past and present suggests that the pain of one mother is passed down to the next generation.

Helga is presented first as a loving but practical mother. In the opening scenes she prepares Eva for the journey to England, teaching her to sew on a button and hiding valuables in the heels of her shoes. These ordinary domestic tasks are poignant because they are a mother's last lessons, and they show Helga's determination that Eva must survive without her. She insists "You have to be able to manage on your own", a statement that is loving in intention but harsh in effect, as it prepares a child for abandonment. When Eva begs to stay, Helga asks "Do you think we would really let you go if we thought we would never see you again?" The rhetorical question is meant to comfort, but the dramatic irony is painful: the audience knows that the separation will destroy their relationship. Helga's reasoning, that any good parent "would want to protect their child",

Question number

presents her sacrifice as an act of love.

Lil, Eva's foster mother in Manchester, offers a contrasting kind of motherhood: warm, humorous and down to earth, but limited in understanding. When Eva arrives speaking German, Lil cannot respond and tells her she will "have to learn English". The modal phrase "have to" shows that Lil expects Eva to adapt rather than adapting herself, and her later suggestion that the old Jewish laws no longer need to be kept, offered as Christian reassurance, shows how innocently a loving adult can erase a child's identity. Yet Lil genuinely cares. She says she took Eva in because she "wanted to help", and at the cinema she tries to protect her from newsreels of the camps. Later, as Faith's grandmother, Lil reveals the secrets Evelyn has buried, suggesting that she has become a bridge between generations. Eva's accusation, "I wasn't your child", shows the tension that remains in a love that can never fully replace the original bond.

Evelyn is perhaps the most complex mother in the play. Having erased her German Jewish past, she is controlling and anxious with Faith, obsessively cleaning and organising. When Faith prepares to leave home, Evelyn fusses over crockery and household items, giving her more than she needs. This shows love expressed through practical care rather than emotional openness, an echo of Helga's sewing and packing. When Faith discovers the truth in the attic, she is furious that her mother has hidden her past, and calls her a terrible mother. Samuels suggests that Evelyn's coldness is not cruelty but a defence: she cannot give Faith the openness she was denied herself.

The structure of the play is crucial to how mothers are presented. Samuels moves between past and present without breaks, so the young Eva and the adult Evelyn often share the stage. The audience sees the same character as both daughter and

Question number

mother, and the cycle becomes visible: the child abandoned by her mother grows into a mother who cannot let her own daughter close. Faith's insistent questioning of Evelyn mirrors Eva's earlier pleading with Helga, so that the generations echo each other.

The climax of this theme comes when Helga, having survived the camps, comes to England to take Eva to America. Eva refuses, and the reunion becomes a bitter confrontation. Eva accuses her mother of having sent her away, and Helga is hurt that her daughter has become English and Christian. Their final parting, set against the stage direction "A boat is about to leave", has a cold finality. In Eva's eyes Helga is now linked with the frightening Ratcatcher, and the metaphor of his "razor eyes" shows how a beloved mother has become a figure of fear. The final image, the Ratcatcher's shadow covering the stage, suggests that the trauma of separation will never leave Evelyn.

Overall, Samuels presents mothers as deeply loving but limited by circumstance. Each mother acts to protect her daughter, yet each causes pain. The play does not blame them so much as show how history, persecution and displacement damage the bond between mothers and daughters across generations.

8 Samuels presents starting a new life in Kindertransport as both a means of survival and a source of lasting pain. Eva's journey from Hamburg to England saves her life, but to build a new life she must slowly destroy the old one, until she becomes Evelyn, a woman who has buried her past so deeply that she cannot share it with her own daughter. The play suggests that a new life is never truly new: the old one remains, like the shadow of the Ratcatcher, beneath everything.

Question number

At the start of the play, Helga presents England as a place of hope. She reassures Eva that "They don't mind Jews there", a simple, almost childlike sentence that shows both her optimism and her desperation. The new life she imagines is safer and more tolerant than Nazi Germany, and her practical preparations, teaching Eva to sew on a button and to look after herself, show that she knows Eva will have to cope alone. Her instruction "You have to be able to manage on your own" defines the new life as one of independence forced on a child far too early. Eva, however, believes that the separation is temporary, and the promise that her parents will follow shapes her early months in England.

Eva's arrival in Manchester shows how difficult this new life is. Lil welcomes her warmly, but the language barrier and cultural differences isolate her. Samuels shows Eva gradually adapting: she learns English, takes an English name and later converts to Christianity. The change of name from Eva to Evelyn is the clearest symbol of a new identity, and it suggests that starting a new life requires her to stop being the German Jewish child she was. Structurally, the play moves between Eva and Evelyn on stage at the same time, so the audience sees the cost of the transformation in the contrast between the eager child and the guarded adult.

A key turning point comes when Eva realises her parents will not arrive. She goes to the station repeatedly, waiting for them, and each disappointment breaks her hope a little further. Then, in a powerful moment of stage action, she removes her jewellery: the stage directions show her taking off "two rings, a charm bracelet, a watch and a chain with a Star of David on it". The list of objects, ending with the Star of David, is significant because it moves from simple keepsakes to the symbol of her faith. In removing them, she seems to accept that her old life has gone and that her new life in England is now permanent.

Question number

As an adult, Evelyn's new life is ordered and secure but emotionally closed. Her obsessive cleaning suggests a desire to scrub away any trace of the past, and when Faith asks about her childhood she is short and evasive. Faith's insistent "What else? What else do you remember?" shows a daughter hungry for the history her mother has hidden. Samuels parallels this with Faith's own move towards a new life. As Faith prepares to leave home, Evelyn showers her with household items, offering "a spare tea pot too", which is touching and slightly comic. The detail shows Evelyn's anxiety to protect her daughter in a way she herself was not protected, though it also hints that she wants to control Faith's new start.

The most striking moment comes when Helga, having survived the camps, arrives to take Eva to start a new life in America. Eva refuses, and her simple sentence "I like it here" is quietly devastating. For Helga, a new life means family reunited; for Eva, it would mean abandoning the identity she has painfully built. The rejection shows how starting a new life can divide people who were once inseparable. By contrast, in the present day Faith wants to contact the family in America, suggesting that the younger generation might reconnect with the past that Evelyn tried to escape.

The play ends with the stage direction "The shadow of the RATCATCHER covers the stage". This image draws together the play's ideas: the Ratcatcher, from the German storybook Eva read as a child, represents the trauma that followed her from Germany. However successfully she has built a new life in England, the past remains present. Samuels therefore presents starting a new life as necessary and even heroic, but never complete. Eva survives, and in that sense her new life is a victory, yet the price is the loss of her mother, her faith and her language, and the play leaves the audience to weigh whether that price was bearable.

Question number

9

In Death and the King's Horseman, Soyinka presents influence as the invisible force that holds a whole world together and, when it is misused or interrupted, tears it apart. Every major decision in the play is shaped by someone else: the community shapes Elesin, desire distracts him, the colonial authority interferes with him, and finally his son's sense of honour overrides him. What fascinates me is that the play's tragedy comes less from one person's choice than from the collision of competing influences, each convinced of its own rightness.

At the start, Elesin is presented as a man of enormous influence. The market women treat him as the centre of their world, and Iyaloja is anxious not to displease him because his coming death gives him almost sacred authority: "If we offend you now, we have mortified the gods". The verb "mortified" suggests that offending Elesin would be a spiritual humiliation, so his wishes carry the weight of the whole cosmos. Soyinka structures the opening around this power. Elesin's playful complaint about his clothes leads the women to dress him in rich cloth, and the scene's music, dance and praise poetry make his status feel theatrical and communal. The influence flows both ways, however, because Elesin's glory exists only as long as he fulfils the community's expectations.

The Praise-Singer acts as a voice of influence that tries to keep Elesin on course. His exchanges with Elesin are full of riddles and proverbs, and his warning that "the hands of women also weaken the weary" anticipates exactly what will happen. Elesin answers with the "Not-I bird" story, in which every creature that hears death calling flees, insisting "Not I". The repetition of the refrain mocks those who are ruled by fear, and Elesin presents himself as above such influence. The irony is painful: the audience watches a man boast that nothing can sway him moments

Question number

before he is swayed by the sight of a beautiful young woman. His sudden question about "that radiance which so suddenly lit up this market" shows how quickly desire overtakes duty, and the light imagery makes her seem almost like a rival to the world beyond.

Iyaloja, who functions rather like the leader of a chorus, is herself influenced by Elesin's status. Although the girl is betrothed to her son, she allows the marriage because a man on the threshold of death must not be refused. Her language reveals uneasy wisdom: she urges that "the considerate traveller / Shed, of his excessive load, all / That may benefit the living". The image of a traveller unloading his burdens frames the marriage as a final gift to the living, yet the word "excessive" hints that she senses danger in his appetites. Structurally, this concession becomes the hinge of the tragedy, because the wedding night delays the ritual long enough for outside forces to act.

The most destructive influence comes from Simon Pilkings, the District Officer. His ignorance of Yoruba belief leads him to see the ritual simply as a barbaric suicide that he must prevent. Soyinka uses dramatic irony in the scene where Simon and Jane wear the egungun costume to a fancy dress ball; Amusa, a Muslim, still refuses to look at them or address them directly, and the stage directions show him fixing his gaze away from the clothes. Even a man outside the traditional faith is influenced by its sanctity, while the British treat it as a party outfit. This contrast exposes how little influence understanding has over colonial power.

When Elesin is arrested, he is forced to confront how far he allowed himself to be swayed. He admits that his will was "squelched in the spittle of an alien race", a disgusting image that captures his shame, but he also recognises that he let himself welcome the interference because part of him wanted to live. The weight

Question number

of blame shifts from the foreigner to himself.

Finally, Olunde reverses the usual direction of influence between father and son. Pilkings had helped send him to England to study medicine, hoping Western education would shape him, yet it is Yoruba honour that wins. His contempt when he sees his father alive is crushing, and his decision to die in Elesin's place restores order at terrible cost. Iyaloja's verdict, "The son has proved the father", uses the verb "proved" with double force: Olunde both tests his father and shows what the father should have been. Soyinka ends with Elesin's suicide and Iyaloja's command to turn to the unborn, so the play suggests that influence, rightly used, binds generations together, but when it is surrendered to desire or arrogance, it destroys the very people it should protect.

10 The character I sympathise with most in Death and the King's Horseman is Olunde, Elesin's eldest son. Although Elesin, Iyaloja and even the unborn child all invite pity, Olunde is the one who pays the full price for other people's failures: he is the only major character who sees both worlds clearly, and yet clarity brings him no escape. Soyinka shapes the play so that our sympathy for him grows quietly until it becomes overwhelming in the final scene.

Olunde does not appear until the fourth scene, and this structural delay matters. By the time he arrives at the Residency, we have watched Elesin postpone his duty for the sake of pleasure and seen Pilkings blunder into a ritual he cannot understand. Olunde, by contrast, has travelled back from England as soon as he heard of the King's death, because he knew his father would have to die and he wanted to bury him. His calm acceptance is startling. Where the British characters panic, he speaks with measured, controlled sentences, and his composure makes

Question number

him seem older and wiser than the adults around him.

His conversation with Jane Pilkings is the centre of my sympathy. She expects him to be grateful to the colonial system that educated him, but he quietly dismantles her assumptions. His remark that "I discovered that you have no respect for what you do not understand" is precise and devastating; the balanced structure of the sentence places respect and understanding side by side, showing that the British fail at both. He also tells her about a ship's captain who blew himself up with his vessel to save the people in the harbour, and Jane admires this as heroism. The anecdote exposes her double standard: self-sacrifice is noble when an Englishman does it but barbaric when a Yoruba man does it. I feel sympathy for Olunde because he is so articulate and so polite, yet still treated as a curiosity in the very house where his father's fate is being decided.

The moment that most moves me is when Olunde sees his father alive and in chains. Having believed the ritual was complete, he is confronted with dishonour, and his words "I have no father, eater of leftovers" reject Elesin completely. The metaphor of "leftovers" suggests that Elesin is now feeding on scraps of a life he should already have left behind. The cruelty of the line is matched by its pain: a son is forced to disown his father in front of the very colonisers who caused the disgrace. Soyinka makes the audience feel the cost of honour on someone young who has done nothing wrong.

Our sympathy becomes unbearable when Olunde's body is carried in by the women in the final scene. He has taken his father's place in the ritual, so the duty Elesin abandoned has passed to the next generation. Iyaloja's words, "The son has proved the father", use the verb "proved" to suggest both a test and a revelation: Olunde shows what Elesin should have been. His sacrifice is presented as noble and

Question number

necessary within Yoruba belief, yet it is also a waste of a gifted life, and that double response is what makes him so tragic.

It would be possible to argue that Elesin deserves more sympathy. He is a man asked to die at the height of his powers, and his long speeches to Iyaloja show genuine anguish. When he sees his son's body, his response is instant: he strangles himself with his chain in "a swift decisive pull". The adjectives "swift" and "decisive" show how, at last, he acts without hesitation, but it is too late. Iyaloja's judgement that he goes into the passage "but oh, how late it all is" captures this. My sympathy for Elesin is real but limited, because his weakness is partly self-indulgent, whereas Olunde suffers for a fault that is not his own.

Iyaloja also deserves pity, since she gave up her son's bride for a man who betrayed her trust, and the play ends with her turning attention to the unborn child, who will enter a world marked by dishonour. However, it is Olunde who unites the play's tensions between duty and desire, tradition and empire, and who sacrifices himself to restore order. Soyinka uses him to show that the greatest suffering often falls on those who understand most, which is why he remains, for me, the most sympathetic character in the play.

11

I agree only in part that Tybalt and Mercutio are very similar characters. Shakespeare clearly pairs them: both are hot-blooded young men who live by a code of honour, both are eager to fight, and both die in the same scene, triggering the catastrophe. Yet the resemblance is mostly on the surface. Tybalt is a single-minded embodiment of the feud, while Mercutio is a sceptical, imaginative outsider whose wit questions the very values that destroy him. Shakespeare seems to use them as mirror images: alike in temper, opposite in vision.

Question number

The clearest similarity is their appetite for violence. Tybalt enters the opening brawl with the line "What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the word, / As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee." The triple structure links peace, hell and the Montagues in one breath, so hatred becomes his identity. Mercutio, too, is spoiling for a fight in Act 3 Scene 1. Benvolio warns that "the day is hot" and the Capulets are about, but Mercutio ignores him and baits Tybalt, mocking his "consort" with "Here's my fiddlestick; here's that shall make you dance." The possessive "my" turns his sword into a personal weapon, and the musical pun shows that he treats combat as play. For an Elizabethan audience, this would have been familiar: young gentlemen fought duels to defend their reputation, even though duelling was illegal, and Verona's streets are presented as a place where a quarrel over a word can kill.

Both men are also intensely loyal. Tybalt's loyalty is to the house of Capulet; at the ball he recognises Romeo's voice and immediately calls for his rapier, declaring "To strike him dead I hold it not a sin." His religious language suggests he believes family honour sanctifies murder. Mercutio's loyalty is to Romeo personally. When Romeo refuses to fight, Mercutio is disgusted by his "calm, dishonourable, vile submission" and draws his sword to defend his friend's name. The three adjectives build to "vile", showing that for Mercutio, peace without honour is shameful. In this sense they share the same masculine code, one which Shakespeare's audience, steeped in ideas of noble reputation and family bonds, would have understood.

However, the differences are more revealing. Tybalt is humourless and rigid. He almost always speaks in formal verse, and even his insults are stiff, as in "Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford / No better term than this: thou art a villain." The mock courtesy of "the love I bear thee" collapses into a blunt accusation, revealing

Question number

a man who sees the world in simple terms of enemy and kin. Mercutio mocks exactly this rigidity, calling Tybalt "More than Prince of Cats" and ridiculing him as a man who fights by the rules of the fencing manuals that were fashionable in Elizabethan London. Mercutio, by contrast, moves easily between prose and verse, bawdy jokes and fantasy.

His Queen Mab speech in Act 1 Scene 4 shows an imagination that Tybalt entirely lacks. The speech spirals from tiny fairy images into darker visions of soldiers dreaming of "cutting foreign throats", before Romeo stops him. Mercutio then dismisses dreams as "the children of an idle brain". This is a cynical, questioning mind, and it sets him apart from both the lovers' idealism and Tybalt's fanaticism.

Their position in Verona also separates them. Tybalt belongs wholly to the feud, but Mercutio is the Prince's kinsman and belongs to neither house. This is why his dying curse, "A plague o' both your houses!", is so powerful. Repeated as he dies, it turns the play's language of disease against the families themselves and shows that Mercutio finally sees the feud as the real enemy. Even dying he puns, telling Romeo to ask for him tomorrow and "you shall find me a grave man". The joke on "grave" captures his refusal to be solemn, and it is unthinkable from Tybalt. Mercutio's protest, "I was hurt under your arm", also exposes the senselessness of a fight he died for without belonging to either side.

Structurally, Shakespeare does bind them together: Mercutio's death leads directly to Tybalt's, Romeo's banishment, and the tragic ending. In that sense they function as a pair, the two sparks that ignite the second half of the play. But I think Shakespeare deliberately contrasts them. Tybalt dies as he lived, a servant of hatred, whereas Mercutio dies seeing through it. They are similar in action, but very different in understanding, and it is Mercutio's understanding that gives the

Question number

play its sharpest criticism of the feud.

12 Mercutio's dying curse, "A plague o' both your houses!", places the blame for the tragedy on the feud, and I think Shakespeare largely agrees with him. Yet the play deliberately spreads responsibility: across fate, the parents, the impulsive young lovers, and the adults who should guide them. By refusing to give a single culprit, Shakespeare invites his audience to see how a whole society, not just one person, can destroy its children.

The Prologue appears to blame fate from the start. Romeo and Juliet are "star-crossed lovers" whose "death-marked love" is already decided before the action begins. The sonnet form, usually associated with love poetry, is turned into a sentence of doom, and because the audience knows the ending, every hopeful moment becomes painfully ironic. To an Elizabethan audience, many of whom believed the stars governed human lives, this would have suggested that the lovers were trapped by forces beyond their control. Romeo himself seems to feel this, crying "O, I am fortune's fool!" after killing Tybalt, and later "Then I defy you, stars!" when he hears of Juliet's death. However, the Prologue also says that their deaths will "bury their parents' strife", which suggests that fate works through human hatred rather than replacing it.

The feud, and the parents who sustain it, carry heavy blame. In Act I Scene I, the Prince calls the brawlers "Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace", and he holds Capulet and Montague responsible because, as heads of their houses, they could end the conflict. Shakespeare never explains the cause of the quarrel, which makes it seem senseless and ingrained, passed down to servants and young men who fight without knowing why. At the end, the Prince's verdict is blunt: "See what a

Question number

scourge is laid upon your hate". The noun "scourge" presents the children's deaths as a punishment from heaven, and his conclusion that "All are punished" spreads guilt across both families and even himself, since he admits he winked at their discords.

Mercutio's own words also implicate him. His mocking of Romeo leads to the Capulet feast, and in Act 3 Scene 1 he provokes Tybalt when Romeo refuses to fight. Duelling was a common, though illegal, way for Elizabethan gentlemen to defend honour, and Mercutio's scorn for Romeo's "calm, dishonourable, vile submission" shows how that code pushes young men into violence. There is a grim irony that the man who curses both houses helped start the fight that kills him.

Romeo is perhaps the most directly responsible character. He rushes from Rosaline to Juliet, marries within a day, kills Tybalt in revenge, and finally poisons himself without waiting. Friar Lawrence warns him "Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast", a proverb whose rhyming neatness contrasts with Romeo's reckless speed. Romeo even blames Juliet's love for weakening him, saying her beauty has made him "effeminate", which suggests a young man reluctant to accept responsibility for his own temper.

The adults who should protect Juliet also fail her. Capulet's rage when she refuses Paris is brutal: he tells her to "hang, beg, starve, die in the streets". The list of verbs shows how a patriarchal father of the time could treat a disobedient daughter as worthless. The Nurse then betrays her too, advising that she marry Paris and dismissing Romeo as "a dishclout" compared to him. Structurally, this is a turning point, because Juliet is left completely alone and turns to the Friar.

Friar Lawrence's plan is well meant but disastrous. He marries the couple in secret,

Question number

hoping to "turn your households' rancour to pure love", but his dangerous potion plan depends on a letter that never arrives because Friar John is held by plague quarantine. When the plan collapses, he flees the tomb and leaves Juliet alone, later blaming "A greater power than we can contradict". His readiness to blame heaven perhaps reveals a desire to escape responsibility. To the Elizabethan audience, Juliet's suicide was a mortal sin, which makes the Friar's failure to protect her even more troubling.

Ultimately, I think Shakespeare presents blame as shared, but the feud is the root. Fate may shape the lovers' paths, but it is human hatred, haste and adult failure that make the ending possible. The final image of the two fathers promising golden statues shows reconciliation arriving only after the cost is paid, which is why Mercutio's curse feels like the play's truest judgement.

13 In Macbeth, Shakespeare presents the gap between appearance and reality as the space in which evil grows. Characters disguise their intentions, the supernatural speaks in riddles that sound like truths, and the mind itself produces visions that cannot be trusted. For a Jacobean audience living in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot, a play about traitors who smile while plotting murder would have felt urgently real, and Shakespeare uses the theme to show that deception ultimately destroys the deceiver.

The theme is announced in the very first scene. The witches chant "Fair is foul, and foul is fair", a paradox whose chiasmus inverts moral values and blurs the line between good and evil. Their trochaic rhythm, distinct from the iambic verse of the human characters, makes them sound unnatural. When Macbeth's first line in the play echoes them, "So foul and fair a day I have not seen", Shakespeare

Question number

suggests that he is already tuned to their confused world. King James had written Daemonologie and believed witches could deceive men to destroy them, so the audience would have recognised the danger instantly.

The prophecies themselves are the clearest example of appearance masking reality. They seem to promise glory, but Banquo warns that "instruments of darkness tell us truths, / Win us with honest trifles, to betray's / In deepest consequence." The contrast between "honest trifles" and "deepest consequence" captures the witches' method: small truths that lure a man into catastrophe. Banquo sees through the appearance, while Macbeth embraces it, and this structural contrast between the two men shows that the danger lies in how the prophecies are interpreted.

Duncan's tragedy is that he cannot see behind faces. After Cawdor's betrayal, he reflects that "There's no art / To find the mind's construction in the face", and almost immediately he greets Macbeth with warm praise. The dramatic irony is cruel: he has learned nothing, and he trusts the next traitor. When he arrives at Inverness he says "This castle hath a pleasant seat", a gentle image of peace that hides the murder planned inside. Lady Macbeth, meanwhile, advises her husband to "look like th' innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't". The image recalls the serpent in Eden, linking their deception to the original sin and suggesting that the Macbeths are corrupting a paradise. Macbeth himself accepts this role, declaring "False face must hide what the false heart doth know", where the repeated "false" shows that deception now governs both his appearance and his inner self.

Shakespeare also explores how the mind can create false realities. Before the murder, Macbeth sees a floating dagger and asks "Is this a dagger which I see before me". In his soliloquy he admits his "eyes are made the fools o' th' other senses", and finally concludes "There's no such thing." The soliloquy form lets the

Question number

audience share his uncertainty, unsure whether the dagger is supernatural or a product of his guilty imagination. At the banquet, Banquo's ghost is visible only to Macbeth, and his outburst, "Never shake / Thy gory locks at me", is a desperate attempt to deny reality. Many Jacobeans believed ghosts were real, so the audience could read it as a genuine spirit or as guilt made visible; either way, the appearance exposes the truth he hides from his guests.

The Porter scene adds a darkly comic layer. Imagining himself as the gatekeeper of hell, he admits "an equivocator", a clear reference to the Jesuit Father Garnet, who defended misleading answers at his trial for the Gunpowder Plot. Equivocation, saying something that sounds true while hiding the truth, becomes the play's key method, and it returns to destroy Macbeth.

In the final act, appearances collapse. Lady Macbeth, once so skilled at pretending, sleepwalks and reveals everything, crying "Out, damned spot!" as she tries to wash away blood that is no longer there. The imperative shows her trying to command reality, but the spot is a symbol of guilt that cannot be removed. Meanwhile Macbeth discovers that the apparitions were equivocations: Birnam Wood does "come" to Dunsinane as soldiers carrying branches, and Macduff was "from his mother's womb / Untimely ripped". Macbeth realises he has trusted "th' equivocation of the fiend / That lies like truth". This oxymoronic phrase sums up the theme: what looks like truth was a lie all along.

Interestingly, Shakespeare also shows that appearance can be used for good, as when Malcolm falsely accuses himself of vices to test Macduff's loyalty in Act 4 Scene 3. The difference is that Malcolm deceives in order to reveal honesty. By the end, with Macbeth branded a "butcher", appearance and reality are reunited, and the restored order suggests that, in a world ruled by God and a rightful king,

Question number

truth will eventually be revealed.

14 I largely agree that Lady Macbeth is presented as a powerful character, but Shakespeare shows that her power is borrowed, fragile and finally self-destructive. In the first two acts she dominates her husband and seems to drive the plot, yet her strength depends on suppressing her conscience, and once the murder is done that suppressed reality returns to break her. Her journey from command to collapse warns a Jacobean audience about the dangers of a woman stepping outside her ordained role, while also allowing us to feel something like pity.

From her first appearance, Lady Macbeth's power is striking. Reading Macbeth's letter, she immediately decides on murder, while he is still hesitating. Her analysis of her husband is confident and critical: "Yet do I fear thy nature; / It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness". The metaphor of "milk" associates kindness with women and nursing, so she sees her husband's gentleness as a feminine weakness that she must overcome. When she hears that Duncan will stay at Inverness, she calls his entrance "fatal" without a moment's doubt. In a patriarchal society where women were expected to be obedient wives and mothers, such decisiveness would have seemed unnatural and threatening.

Her soliloquy calling on spirits shows her seeking power from outside herself. She commands them to "unsex me here" and to "take my milk for gall". The imperatives sound authoritative, but the request itself is revealing: she believes she cannot commit murder as a woman, so she asks to be stripped of her femininity. King James's interest in witchcraft makes the invocation even darker, as it aligns her with the witches and with demonic forces. Shakespeare may be suggesting that her power is not natural but conjured, and therefore unstable.

Question number

Her greatest moment of power is her manipulation of Macbeth in Act I Scene 7. When he decides to "proceed no further", she attacks his masculinity: "When you durst do it, then you were a man". She then claims she would have "dashed the brains out" of her own nursing baby rather than break such a promise. The violence of this image is shocking, and it shows her using every rhetorical weapon to dominate him. Her command to "screw your courage to the sticking-place" turns courage into a mechanical instrument she can tighten, and Macbeth's surrender shows how completely she controls him at this point. In the original performances, a boy actor played the role, which perhaps made her rejection of femininity even more theatrical and uncanny.

After the murder, her control is still evident. She scolds him as "Infirm of purpose!" and takes the daggers back herself, and she dismisses the blood with "A little water clears us of this deed." The simplicity of the line shows her practical, unflinching mind. Yet there are already cracks. She admits she could not kill Duncan because he "resembled / My father as he slept", a moment of buried humanity which suggests that her strength has limits.

From Act 3, her power shifts. As queen, she says "Nought's had, all's spent", where the monosyllables convey a hollow emptiness: she has gained the crown but lost peace. Macbeth begins to act without her, telling her to "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck" when he plans Banquo's murder. The affectionate "chuck" sounds patronising, and the structure of the play now pushes her to the edges. At the banquet she still tries to rescue the situation, covering for his outbursts and dismissing the guests, but she is reacting, no longer directing.

By Act 5, she has lost all power. Sleepwalking, she speaks in fragmented prose

Question number

instead of the controlled verse she once used, a shift in form that mirrors her disintegration. "Out, damned spot!" shows her trying to command her own guilt, but the imperative is now useless. Her line "all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand" reverses her earlier confidence about "a little water", and the adjective "little" makes her seem diminished and childlike. Her death happens offstage, reported by a cry, and Macbeth responds with weary detachment: "She should have died hereafter". Malcolm's final description of her as a "fiend-like queen" reduces her to a demonic stereotype.

So Lady Macbeth is powerful, but only for a time and at a terrible cost. Shakespeare presents her as a commanding force who dares to overturn the Jacobean order, yet her power proves to be a mask over a human conscience she could never truly kill. Her fall reinforces the play's message that unnatural ambition destroys itself, but her suffering also makes her one of Shakespeare's most complex tragic figures.

15

Money is the engine of The Merchant of Venice. It drives the plot, defines relationships and exposes prejudice, yet Shakespeare constantly asks whether wealth can be separated from love, mercy and identity. Set in Venice, a city famous in Shakespeare's time as a centre of trade and banking, the play tests its characters by how they use money and what they are willing to sacrifice for it.

From the opening scene, love and money are tangled together. Bassanio admits that his "chief care" is to escape "the great debts" he has run up, and when he describes Portia, he begins with her fortune: "In Belmont is a lady richly left". Her wealth comes before her beauty and virtue in his speech, which makes the audience wonder whether his courtship is romantic or financial. He even compares

Question number

her to the golden fleece, presenting her as a prize to be won by a voyage. Antonio's response is generous: "My purse, my person, my extremest means / Lie all unlocked to your occasions." The list moves from money to his own body, and the word "person" foreshadows how literally he will offer himself. Here money is a sign of friendship and love, freely given.

For Shylock, money has a very different meaning. His first lines in Act 1 Scene 3 circle around the same phrase, "Three thousand ducats, well", and the repetition gives an impression of a man calculating carefully. But Shakespeare also shows why he resents Antonio. In an aside, Shylock says he hates him because "he lends out money gratis", lowering the rate of interest in Venice. Christian teaching at the time condemned usury, and Jews in Europe were often restricted to money-lending, so the play reflects a real tension. Shylock defends his profit with the story of Jacob's sheep and says "I make it breed as fast", an image that presents money as a living thing, which Antonio finds unnatural. The two men's views of money become a symbol of their religious and cultural conflict.

The bond turns money into flesh. Shylock proposes a pound of Antonio's flesh as a "merry sport", but when Antonio's ships seem lost, money stops mattering to Shylock. In the trial, Bassanio offers far more than the debt, yet Shylock refuses: even if every ducat in six thousand were divided into six parts, he says, "I would not draw them; I would have my bond." The repetition of "ducat" shows money multiplying while his desire for revenge remains fixed. Ironically, the moneylender is now the one person who values something above money. Portia's victory, which depends on the bond allowing no blood, reveals that the law of contract can be turned against him. His lament that taking his wealth takes "the means whereby I live" shows how money is tied to his survival in a hostile city.

Question number

Money also shapes Shylock's relationship with Jessica. When she elopes with Lorenzo, taking his ducats and jewels, Solanio mocks Shylock's cries: "My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!" The alternating structure suggests that he cannot separate his grief for his child from his grief for his gold, although Solanio's report is deliberately comic and may not be fair. Later, Shylock learns that Jessica traded his ring from his late wife Leah for a monkey, and he says he "would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys". This moment reveals that some things he values far beyond money, which complicates the Christians' stereotype of him.

In Belmont, the casket test examines money directly. The Prince of Morocco chooses gold, which promises "what many men desire", and finds a skull with the message "All that glisters is not gold". Bassanio rejects gold as "Hard food for Midas", recalling the king whose greed turned everything to gold, and chooses lead, which demands that the chooser "give and hazard all he hath". Structurally, the casket plot reverses the money values of Venice: true love requires risk and sacrifice rather than greed. Yet Portia's father still controls her marriage through money and inheritance, reflecting the arranged marriages of the period.

By the end, money has been redistributed. Shylock loses his wealth and is forced to convert, while Antonio learns that his ships have safely returned. The Christians end rich and happy, but the price is the destruction of Shylock. Shakespeare seems to suggest that money in Venice is never neutral: it reveals generosity in Antonio, greed and grief in Shylock, and an uneasy mix of love and self-interest in Bassanio. The play leaves its audience questioning whether the Christians' triumph is really a victory of mercy over money, or simply the victory of one group's wealth over another's.

Question number

16

Shakespeare presents Jessica as a daughter caught between two worlds: the oppressive Jewish household of her father and the Christian society she longs to join. Her confession that she is "ashamed to be my father's child" makes her rebellion seem sympathetic at first, yet the play gradually complicates our view, showing her as both a victim of patriarchal control and a figure whose escape is uneasy and incomplete.

Jessica's first appearance in Act 2 Scene 3 defines her unhappiness. She tells Lancelot that "Our house is hell", and the stark monosyllables make home sound like a prison. The image places her in direct conflict with her father, and it also prepares the audience to sympathise with her desire to leave. In her short soliloquy she asks "what heinous sin is it in me / To be ashamed to be my father's child!" The adjective "heinous" shows that she recognises the seriousness of rejecting a parent, which would have been a grave offence in a society where daughters were expected to obey their fathers absolutely. Yet she resolves the conflict with a sharp distinction: "though I am a daughter to his blood, / I am not to his manners." The antithesis separates biology from behaviour, suggesting that she sees herself as morally and spiritually different from Shylock.

Shakespeare reinforces this with her rhyming couplet: "O Lorenzo, / If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife, / Become a Christian and thy loving wife." The rhyme of "strife" and "wife" makes her decision sound neat and final, and the future tense shows her determination. To an Elizabethan audience, her conversion would have seemed like salvation, since Christianity was considered the only true faith, and the play's Christian characters treat her as a prize rescued from darkness. Yet the condition "If thou keep promise" hints at vulnerability: her future depends entirely on Lorenzo.

Question number

Shylock's treatment of her helps explain her choice. In Act 2 Scene 5 he orders her to "Lock up my doors" and to shut the windows against the masquers' music, as if the outside world and its pleasures are a contamination. The repeated commands show his control over her body and her space. Shakespeare structures the scene with sharp irony, since Jessica is about to escape the very house he locks.

Her elopement is presented as theatrical and morally ambiguous. Disguised as a page, she throws down a casket of money to Lorenzo, saying it is "worth the pains", and promises to "gild" herself with more ducats. The verb "gild" suggests covering herself in gold, as if wealth will make her more acceptable to her Christian husband. She also admits, "I am much ashamed of my exchange", referring to her boy's clothes, but the word "exchange" has a wider meaning: she is exchanging father, faith and identity for a new life. Her parting words, "I have a father, you a daughter, lost", have a quiet sadness, and the chiasmus balances her gain against Shylock's loss.

The consequences make her harder to admire. Tubal reports that she has spent wildly in Genoa and traded Shylock's ring, a gift from his wife Leah, for a monkey. Shylock's grief, that he "would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys", gives him unexpected humanity and makes Jessica's action seem careless, even cruel. Some audiences may feel that she has inherited the very obsession with money that she condemned in her father, simply spending rather than saving.

In Belmont, her position remains uncertain. Gratiano greets her as Lorenzo's "infidel", showing that conversion has not erased her Jewish identity in Christian eyes. Lancelot jokes that she is damned because of her father, and she replies that she will be "saved by my husband", a witty line that also reveals how her

Question number

salvation depends on marriage. When she and Lorenzo trade lines in "In such a night" in Act 5, they compare themselves to lovers such as Troilus and Thisbe, whose stories ended in betrayal or death. The playful duet is beautiful, but the tragic myths cast doubt on their future. Her final line in the play, "I am never merry when I hear sweet music", suggests a lingering melancholy amid the comedy's celebration.

Overall, Shakespeare presents Jessica as more than a simple rebel. Her desire for freedom reflects the restrictions placed on daughters in a patriarchal society and the harshness of Shylock's home, yet her betrayal also deepens our sympathy for her father. By the end, she belongs fully neither to the Jewish world she has abandoned nor to the Christian one that still sees her as an outsider, making her one of the play's quietest but most unsettling figures.

17 I largely agree that Elizabeth and Jane are presented as very different characters: Jane is gentle, trusting and reserved, while Elizabeth is witty, sceptical and outspoken. However, Austen does not set them up as simple opposites. The sisters share intelligence, integrity and a refusal to marry without affection, and their differences are complementary rather than hostile. Austen uses the pair to explore two ways a young woman might move through a marriage market that offered her few choices, and she suggests that each sister's temperament is both a strength and a danger.

The difference is clearest in how they judge other people. When Jane praises Bingley, Elizabeth teases her: "you are a great deal too apt, you know, to like people in general. You never see a fault in anybody." The hyperbole of "never" and "anybody" is affectionate, but it also exposes the risk in Jane's goodness: she

Question number

cannot protect herself because she cannot imagine deceit. This becomes almost comic when she tries to believe that both Darcy and Wickham are innocent, insisting there must be some misunderstanding. Elizabeth, by contrast, prides herself on her quick insight. Yet Austen's structure makes this contrast ironic, because it is Elizabeth whose judgement fails most seriously. She trusts Wickham's story within a single evening, and only after reading Darcy's letter does she cry, "How despicably have I acted!" and admit, "Till this moment I never knew myself." The exclamation and the sudden self-knowledge suggest that Elizabeth's cleverness, not Jane's innocence, has been the more dangerous blindness. Perhaps the sisters are different in manner but equally fallible.

Their differences also shape how they express feeling. Jane's love for Bingley is real, but she hides it so carefully that Charlotte warns that a woman who conceals her affection may lose the chance of fixing a man. Darcy's letter confirms this, describing Jane's manner as cheerful and engaging "but without any symptom of peculiar regard". The cool, almost clinical phrase shows how easily modesty could be misread. In Regency society a woman could not openly pursue a man, so Jane's propriety is exactly what her culture demanded, yet it nearly costs her the marriage. Elizabeth, meanwhile, says precisely what she thinks. She rejects Mr Collins, and then refuses Darcy with the stinging conditional "had you behaved in a more gentleman-like manner". Darcy's response, "mingled incredulity and mortification", reveals how unthinkable it was for a woman with no fortune to refuse a man with ten thousand a year. Through Elizabeth, Austen challenges the expectation that women should accept the most prosperous offer; through Jane, she shows the cost of obeying the rules too perfectly.

Austen's use of form reinforces the contrast. Because the narrative is filtered mainly through Elizabeth's consciousness, we see Jane largely from the outside,

Question number

through her calm speech and her letters. When Lydia elopes, Jane's letters to Elizabeth are hurried and disordered, written in two parts, and she turns to her sister for support. Elizabeth then acts, returning home at once. Jane seeks comfort; Elizabeth seeks solutions. Similarly, early in the novel Elizabeth walks three miles to Netherfield to nurse the sick Jane, arriving with muddy petticoats that the Bingley sisters mock. The episode shows Elizabeth's energy and independence, which shocked the decorum of polite society, but it also shows that her boldness is often in the service of Jane.

The similarities between the sisters are therefore important. Both suffer humiliation: Darcy calls Elizabeth "tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me", and Bingley abandons Jane on the advice of his friends. Both endure the embarrassment of their mother and younger sisters, which threatens their prospects in a society where a family's behaviour determined a daughter's worth. Most significantly, both marry for love. Jane advises Elizabeth to do anything rather than marry without affection, a sentiment Elizabeth shares completely. In this they differ from Charlotte, who accepts Collins for security, and from the impulsive Lydia.

Structurally, Austen brings the sisters' stories together at the end, with both engagements falling close together and both men returning to Netherfield. When Jane wishes her sister equal happiness, Elizabeth jokes that she lacks Jane's goodness and so "never can have your happiness". The irony is that she is about to become engaged to Darcy herself. Austen undercuts Elizabeth's claim of difference just as she makes it.

Overall, the statement is largely true: in temperament and manner, Elizabeth and Jane are strikingly different, and Austen uses the contrast to examine the limited

Question number

roles available to women. Yet beneath the contrast they share the values Austen most admires, and their contrasting virtues seem designed to balance one another. Jane's kindness softens Elizabeth's sharpness, and Elizabeth's spirit protects Jane's gentleness, so that together they offer a fuller picture of the ideal heroine than either could alone.

18 The title Pride and Prejudice is significant because it names the two flaws that keep Elizabeth and Darcy apart and, in overcoming them, bring them together. Austen originally called the novel First Impressions, and the change is revealing: the final title shifts attention from a single mistake to two moral failings, and it refuses to assign them neatly. Although Darcy at first seems to embody pride and Elizabeth prejudice, Austen shows that each character possesses both, and that these faults are bound up with the class-conscious society of Regency England.

Darcy's pride is established at the Meryton assembly. He refuses to dance with Elizabeth, judging her "tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me". The deflating "tolerable" reveals a man who measures others against his own status, and the crowd quickly decides he is the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world. Elizabeth later mocks him to Colonel Fitzwilliam, and Mrs Bennet's account that he walked here and walked there, fancying himself very great, uses repetition to make his aloofness seem absurd. Austen's ironic narrator invites us to laugh, but she also reminds us that Darcy's pride has a social basis: as master of Pemberley he has been taught, as he later admits, to think meanly of all the rest of the world. Pride here is almost an inheritance of the landed gentry.

Elizabeth's prejudice grows directly out of her injured pride. She tells Charlotte, "I could easily forgive his pride, if he had not mortified mine." The balanced clauses

Question number

expose how closely the two faults are linked: her judgement is coloured by wounded vanity. This is why she believes Wickham's story so readily. He is charming, and he confirms what she already wants to think. Austen's structure is careful here: we are given Wickham's version first and only receive the truth with Darcy's letter, so the reader shares Elizabeth's prejudice and then shares her shock. Mary's pedantic remark that pride relates to our opinion of ourselves, while vanity relates to what we would have others think of us, seems foolish at the time, but it quietly anticipates the novel's moral concerns.

The first proposal is the moment where pride and prejudice collide. Darcy dwells on the inferiority of her connections, proposing almost against his will, and his pride turns a declaration of love into an insult. Elizabeth's reply is equally proud, accusing him of failing to behave "in a more gentleman-like manner". The word "gentleman" strikes at the heart of his identity, because it challenges his assumption that rank alone makes a man a gentleman. For a contemporary reader, a woman without fortune refusing such a match would have been startling, since marriage was often the only route to security for women like the Bennet sisters, whose home is entailed away. Elizabeth's refusal shows that she values respect and love over wealth.

Austen then uses the epistolary form of Darcy's letter as the turning point. In private, re-reading it, Elizabeth recognises her own blindness: "How despicably have I acted!" and "I, who have prided myself on my discernment!" The exclamations and the verb "prided" show that her prejudice was really a form of pride in her own cleverness. Her conclusion, "Till this moment I never knew myself", marks the moment of self-knowledge at the centre of the novel. Darcy undergoes a parallel change, later confessing that he has been "a selfish being all my life, in practice, though not in principle", and crediting Elizabeth with humbling him. Both

Question number

characters, therefore, have to be educated out of their faults.

The second half of the novel tests this change. At Pemberley Darcy is courteous to the Gardiners, the very trade connections he once despised, and he secretly arranges Lydia's marriage to Wickham, an act of humility that saves the Bennets from disgrace. Lady Catherine, by contrast, represents pride that cannot change. Her outraged question, "Are the shades of Pemberley to be thus polluted?", shows aristocratic contempt for social mixing, and the metaphor of pollution is so exaggerated that it becomes ridiculous. Ironically, her interference only gives Darcy hope. By the end, Elizabeth can tell her father that Darcy has no improper pride, and the adjective is important: Austen does not condemn all pride, only pride without merit or kindness.

The title is significant, then, because it defines both the obstacles and the resolution of the plot. Austen suggests that pride and prejudice are not simply individual vices but products of a society obsessed with rank and first impressions. By making her hero and heroine share both faults and grow beyond them, she argues that a good marriage depends on self-knowledge and mutual respect rather than status alone.

19 Dickens presents the marriage of Joe and Mrs Joe as a comic but disturbing inversion of the Victorian household. Mrs Joe rules through violence and complaint, while Joe, physically powerful but gentle, submits to her. Through this relationship Dickens explores ideas of power, goodness and forgiveness, and he uses the contrast between husband and wife to define Joe as one of the moral centres of the novel.

Question number

From the first chapters, Mrs Joe's dominance is shown through Pip's adult narrative voice, which combines childish fear with ironic humour. She has brought Pip up "by hand", a phrase she repeats proudly, though Pip wryly concludes that, since her heavy hand falls on her husband as often as on him, he and Joe were both brought up by hand. Her appearance is hard and unwelcoming: her apron is "stuck full of pins and needles", an image which suggests that she is impossible to approach without being hurt. The cane she uses, "Tickler", is given an affectionate, ironic name, and Joe warns Pip that she has "Ram-paged out" looking for him. The capitalised, broken-up verb makes her temper sound like a natural force, something to hide from rather than resist. Joe and Pip are presented as "fellow-sufferers", and Pip admits he treated Joe as "a larger species of child, and as no more than my equal". Dickens therefore places Joe not as the head of the house but as another of its children.

Mrs Joe's contempt for her husband is constant. She complains that it is bad enough to be "a blacksmith's wife (and him a Gargery)" without having to raise Pip too. The parenthesis works as a sneer, as if Joe's name alone is a humiliation. She resents her lot and constantly performs martyrdom, whether at Christmas dinner or when Pip is sent to Miss Havisham's, where her main interest is what the visit might bring the family. Joe, meanwhile, responds with patience. When Pip asks why he does not stand up to her, Joe explains that his father drank and "hammered away at my mother, most onmerciful". Joe's dialect, rendered phonetically, can seem comic, but here it carries real pain. He has chosen to suffer himself rather than risk becoming a violent husband. Dickens makes Joe's apparent weakness a form of moral strength: Pip calls him a kind of Hercules in strength and also in weakness, capturing the paradox.

This inversion would have been striking to Victorian readers. The ideal of the

Question number

period, often called the angel in the house, imagined the wife as gentle, submissive and nurturing, with the husband holding authority. Mrs Joe is the opposite of this ideal, and her aggression might partly reflect frustration at a narrow, laborious life in the marshes. Joe, by refusing to use force, rejects the brutality that was widely tolerated in working-class marriages, when wife-beating was common and divorce was effectively impossible for people of his class. Dickens appears to suggest that true manliness lies in tenderness, not domination.

Structurally, the attack by Orlick transforms the relationship. Struck from behind, Mrs Joe is left brain-damaged and largely unable to speak. Strikingly, she becomes gentle and almost childlike, and tries to appease Orlick, the very man who attacked her. Joe cares for her devotedly alongside Biddy, never complaining. Before her death she lays her head on Joe's shoulder and says only "Joe", then "Pardon", then "Pip". These single words are deeply moving: after years of shouting, her last speech is a plea for forgiveness. Dickens leaves it ambiguous whether this is genuine repentance or simply the effect of her injury, but the moment allows Joe's long patience to be, in some sense, rewarded.

Even after her death, Joe remains generous. At the funeral he struggles to find something positive to say, beginning that Pip knew her "when she were a fine figure of a" woman and then trailing off. The unfinished sentence shows his decency: he will not speak ill of his wife, yet he cannot honestly praise her. It is both comic and quietly sad.

Ultimately, the relationship between Joe and Mrs Joe is a study in contrasts. Mrs Joe changes, from tyrant to helpless dependant, while Joe stays the same: loyal, forgiving and good. Dickens uses Mrs Joe's harshness to throw Joe's virtue into relief, preparing the reader to recognise, as Pip eventually does, that Joe is the

Question number

true gentleman of the novel despite his lack of wealth or education. The marriage shows that goodness can endure even in the most unequal and unhappy of homes.

20

Wealth is central to Great Expectations: it drives the plot, shapes Pip's identity and exposes the values of Victorian society. Yet Dickens presents money with deep suspicion. Again and again, wealth promises happiness, status and freedom, but brings isolation, snobbery and moral confusion. By tracing Pip's rise and fall, Dickens argues that true worth lies in loyalty, work and kindness rather than in fortune.

At the start of the novel Pip is poor but secure, destined to be apprenticed to Joe at the forge. His desire for wealth is awakened at Satis House, a name Estella explains as meaning that whoever owned the house could want nothing else. The irony is bitter, since the house is a ruin of stopped clocks and rotting wedding cake, and Miss Havisham's fortune has brought her nothing but misery after Compeyson jilted her. Estella's contempt teaches Pip to see himself through the eyes of class: she scorns his "coarse hands" and "thick boots" and mocks that he calls the knaves "Jacks". These small, concrete details show how class was marked by manners and appearance, and they plant in Pip a shame he cannot shake. Back home he confesses, "It is a most miserable thing to feel ashamed of home." Dickens uses the retrospective first-person narrative to let the older Pip judge his younger self, so that the reader feels both his longing and its cost.

Wealth also exposes greed in others. Mrs Joe and Pumblechook care chiefly about what Miss Havisham might give, and when Pip receives a premium for his apprenticeship, Pumblechook takes credit as if he were the benefactor. Miss Havisham's relatives, Sarah Pocket, Camilla and the rest, hover around her solely in

Question number

hope of inheritance, and Dickens satirises them as flatterers whose affection is purely financial. In contrast, Joe is visibly uncomfortable in wealthy settings. At Satis House he addresses all his answers to Pip rather than to Miss Havisham, and later, visiting Pip in London, he is so awkward that Pip admits that if he could have kept him away by paying money, he would have done so. This is one of the most damning admissions in the novel, as Pip measures even love in money.

When Jaggers announces Pip's "great expectations", wealth transforms him, but not for the better. In London he and Herbert run up debts and join the Finches of the Grove, and Pip reflects that they spent as much money as they could and got as little for it as possible, being always more or less miserable. The balanced, ironic sentence captures the emptiness of genteel idleness. Bentley Drummle, a wealthy heir, is presented as sulky, stupid and brutal, yet it is he whom Estella marries, showing how inherited money could buy social standing regardless of character. Herbert's father's view that no man who was not a true gentleman at heart was ever a true gentleman in manner provides the moral counterweight: Dickens separates gentility from money.

The great structural twist reveals the source of Pip's fortune. It is not Miss Havisham but Magwitch, the convict Pip helped on the marshes, who earned his money as a sheep farmer in Australia after transportation. Magwitch declares that he has "made a gentleman" of Pip, and calls himself his second father. Pip's horror reveals the snobbery underneath his expectations: he can accept wealth from a lady but not from a criminal. Ironically, Magwitch's money is the most honestly earned and most generously given in the novel. When Magwitch is captured, his wealth is forfeited to the Crown, and Pip loses everything, but by then he has learnt to love the man rather than the money.

Question number

Dickens also shows how wealth shapes justice. Jaggers' clients survive because they can pay for his skill, and Compeyson, educated and gentlemanly in appearance, received a lighter sentence than Magwitch for the same crime because he looked like a gentleman to the court. Wemmick's advice to secure "portable property" reduces human relationships to possessions. Dickens, whose own father was imprisoned for debt and who worked as a boy in a blacking factory, knew how cruelly Victorian society judged people by money.

By the end, Pip works as a clerk in Herbert's firm, earning a modest living through his own labour. This conclusion suggests that Dickens does not reject money altogether, but values wealth that is earned honestly and shared. Wealth is important in the novel precisely because of its dangers: it tempts Pip away from Joe and Biddy, and only when he loses it does he recover his humanity.

21

In The Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne explores crime not simply as the breaking of a law but as a question of who has the right to judge. The Puritan community treats Hester's adultery as a crime against both God and the state, and witchcraft lurks at the edges of the town, yet Hawthorne suggests that the gravest offences in the novel are hidden ones: Dimmesdale's concealment and Chillingworth's revenge. Writing in 1850 about seventeenth-century Boston, he questions a society that merged sin with crime and punishment with public humiliation.

The novel's opening immediately links crime to the foundation of the colony. Hawthorne observes that the founders of any new settlement soon set aside ground for a cemetery and a prison, and he calls the prison "the black flower of civilized society". The oxymoron implies that crime and punishment grow naturally out of civilisation itself. Beside the prison door, however, grows "a wild rose-bush",

Question number

which the narrator offers as a symbol of moral blossom and sympathy. From the first page, Hawthorne sets harsh law against the possibility of mercy.

The women waiting outside the prison show how the Puritans fused religious and civil law. One declares that Hester "ought to die" and asks, "Is there not law for it?", while another answers that there is, "both in the Scripture and the statute-book". The pairing of Scripture and statute-book captures a theocracy in which sin was literally a crime. In the real Massachusetts Bay Colony adultery could indeed carry the death penalty, so Hester's sentence of the scaffold and the letter might seem lenient, yet Hawthorne presents the spectacle as cruel. Hester stands on the scaffold holding Pearl, and the letter, embroidered with defiant artistry, turns punishment into a kind of display. When pressed to name her partner she refuses, saying her letter is "too deeply branded" and wishing she might endure his agony as well as her own. Her refusal suggests that she accepts her punishment but rejects the community's right to complete it.

Hawthorne's form is crucial here. The affair itself happens before the novel begins and is never described. By structuring the book around the aftermath, Hawthorne turns attention from the crime to its psychological consequences. This is a romance concerned with the inner life, and its real subject is guilt. Dimmesdale, the hidden criminal, suffers far more than the publicly punished Hester. He scourges himself and keeps vigils, and he envies Hester because she wears her letter openly while his own "burns in secret". The paradox is that the visible criminal grows stronger while the respected minister decays. Hawthorne implies that concealment is itself a further sin.

Chillingworth commits a different kind of crime, one that no Puritan court would recognise. He dedicates himself to discovering and tormenting Hester's lover,

Question number

becoming a leech in both senses, physician and parasite. In the forest Dimmesdale declares that "That old man's revenge has been blacker than my sin. He has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart." The colour imagery of "blacker" deliberately echoes the "black flower" of the prison, suggesting that the true crime of the novel is not passion but calculated cruelty. Chillingworth even admits that the first wrong was his, in marrying the young Hester when he was old and cold.

Witchcraft provides a darker counterpoint. Mistress Hibbins, the governor's sister, invites Hester to meet the "Black Man" in the forest. Hester replies that, had the magistrates taken Pearl from her, she would willingly have gone and signed her name in the Black Man's book. This shows that the law's cruelty could itself drive people into the very crimes it feared. Mistress Hibbins was, according to the narrator, later executed as a witch, a detail that connects to Hawthorne's own guilt about his ancestor John Hathorne, a judge at the Salem witch trials. Hawthorne is often said to have added a "w" to his surname to distance himself, and the novel seems to atone for that inheritance by exposing the hypocrisy of Puritan justice.

Finally, Hawthorne shows that a crime need not define a person forever. Over seven years, Hester's charity leads many people to say her letter means "Able", and the narrator notes that the scarlet letter "had not done its office". Its intended meaning of shame has been overwritten by her goodness. At the end she returns voluntarily to Boston and wears the letter by choice, becoming a counsellor to troubled women.

Overall, Hawthorne presents crime as far more complex than the Puritans allowed. By contrasting Hester's open punishment with Dimmesdale's secret guilt and

Question number

Chillingworth's unpunished revenge, he suggests that the law can punish acts but cannot judge hearts, and that a society obsessed with punishing sin may commit greater wrongs than the sinners it condemns.

22 Arthur Dimmesdale changes from a revered but secretly guilty minister into a broken man, and finally into one who finds the courage to confess. Hawthorne charts this change through Dimmesdale's body as much as his mind, so that his physical decline mirrors his spiritual torment. The journey is not a straight line: Dimmesdale moves between concealment, near-confession and temptation before his final act of truth. Through him, Hawthorne examines the corrosive power of hidden guilt in a Puritan society that worshipped outward holiness.

At the start of the novel Dimmesdale is a young, eloquent minister, admired across Boston. When he is asked to persuade Hester to name the father of her child, he urges her to speak, telling her not to stay silent out of pity for the man, even if that man must step down from a high place. The dramatic irony is intense: the reader soon suspects that he is speaking about himself and is, in effect, begging her to do what he cannot. His tremulous, sweet voice moves the crowd, yet Hester refuses. From this first scene, Hawthorne presents Dimmesdale as a man divided between conscience and cowardice. In a theocracy where ministers were the highest moral authorities, exposure would mean total ruin, and his fear of public shame keeps him silent.

As the years pass, Dimmesdale's health declines. He develops the habit of pressing his hand over his heart, a gesture that Pearl notices and questions, as if he bears a hidden letter of his own. Hawthorne's symbolism suggests that his guilt is literally lodged in his body. Ironically, his suffering makes him a better preacher,

Question number

since his sense of his own sin gives him sympathy for sinners, and his congregation reveres him all the more. Hawthorne exposes the hypocrisy at the heart of this: the more Dimmesdale describes himself as vile from the pulpit, the more his listeners think him a saint. He punishes himself in private with a bloody scourge, fasting and night-long vigils, but these acts are a substitute for confession, and they bring no peace.

Chillingworth accelerates the change. Moving in with Dimmesdale as his physician, he probes the minister's heart with cold curiosity, and Hawthorne describes him as a leech, both healer and parasite. Their conversations about hidden sins and herbs that grow on graves are full of double meanings, and Dimmesdale gradually becomes a nervous, haunted figure. The structure of the middle chapters keeps the two men locked together, intensifying the reader's sense of claustrophobia.

The midnight vigil on the scaffold marks a turning point. Dimmesdale stands where Hester once stood, but only in darkness, a half-confession that reveals his desire for truth and his fear of it. When Pearl asks whether he will stand with them at noontide, he refuses. Even when a great red "A" seems to blaze in the sky, he remains hidden. Hawthorne uses the meteor to suggest that heaven itself demands the confession he will not make.

In the forest, Dimmesdale briefly changes in another direction. Hester tells him Chillingworth's identity and urges him to flee with her to Europe. Feeling powerless, he begs her to resolve for him, and she answers, "Thou shalt not go alone!" For a moment he seems reborn, and Hawthorne fills the scene with sunlight. Yet on his return to town he is tempted to blasphemy, longing to whisper wicked suggestions to the pious people he meets. This strange episode suggests that escaping guilt without confessing it only corrupts him further.

Question number

The final change comes after the Election Sermon, his greatest triumph. Instead of fleeing, he climbs the scaffold with Hester and Pearl in the full light of day and confesses before the people of New England. He tears open his clothing to reveal his breast, and Chillingworth's furious "Thou hast escaped me!" shows that confession has freed Dimmesdale from his tormentor. Pearl kisses him, and Hawthorne writes that "A spell was broken." Dimmesdale dies almost at once, yet his death is presented as a release rather than a defeat.

Overall, Dimmesdale's change is the central psychological drama of the novel. He moves from hypocrisy through torment to truth, and Hawthorne uses his tragedy to deliver the moral he states directly near the end: "Be true! Be true! Be true!" The repetition makes plain that, for Hawthorne, concealment is more destructive than the original sin, and that the rigid, judgemental Puritan world left a man like Dimmesdale no way to be honest and live.