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REPORT
ON THE WORK IN ENGLISH
PAPER II, SHAKESPEARE
WITH
EXTRACTS FROM CANDIDATES'
ANSWERS

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NOTE. This is not a report on the examination but on the performance. No attempt has been made to offer a critique of the paper or of the methods of the examiners.

Except where otherwise stated the samples are taken without significant correction from the scripts. The first part of the report attempts to generalise from selected data, while the second is made up of appendices, with brief comment on a variety of examples.

The passages from Section A of the June 1957 question paper are printed in full on pages 42 to 44. The questions from Section B of the paper are given in full in Part II of the report.

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PART I

1. *Introduction*

The most radical problems of Shakespeare teaching and examining are those of education generally and this is not the place to discuss them. One would like to believe that Advanced Level Shakespeare studies are meant to encourage the sort of interest in the plays that will continue outside school, whether in the university or elsewhere. The task of all who are concerned with Shakespeare should be to keep the plays alive, to keep responses to them full and fresh. This is the teacher's job and the examiner's. There are indeed few who would not endorse the plea that opens the 1950 report, for more evidence in the scripts of "enjoyment of Shakespeare's plays, a fresh, personal response to them, and some stirrings of independent judgement about them and arising from them".

The words "personal response" may nevertheless mislead a candidate who takes them as license for any kind of perversity or naivety which is prefaced by "In my opinion" or enforced by "at any rate that is what I personally think". Personal responses, like most other things, can be simulated, and the examiner himself needs a "tact for the genuine" if he is to distinguish that quality in the candidate. However, the examiner, when he is vigilant, looks for the kind of responsiveness that has been cultivated, intensified and made articulate by study. The teacher and the critic often do much to shape and clarify a candidate's personal response, although sometimes, no doubt, they must share with examiners the responsibility for destroying it.

Conditions vary too much from school to school to allow any but the thinnest generalisations about teaching methods, and a discussion of them would in any case come outside the scope of an examiners report. There may be some fitness, however, in offering a few observations about the qualities of candidates who have clearly been well taught. It is most apparent that those who do well in Section A have not always rehearsed the passages they paraphrase and have not been trained to reproduce the notes; they make too many small mistakes and are guilty of omissions that poorer candidates could correct. But they have been taught a critical method—to ask the right questions about their own reactions to the passage, and to supply answers that are carefully phrased and express their sense of what is important. What these questions and answers are will, it is hoped, be made clear in the pages that follow, particularly in the Appendices. It will be seen that the best candidates are often those who show themselves conscious of the play as a made thing—usually, but by no means always, as a thing made for the theatre. They are more likely to ask themselves, "Why does Shakespeare make Claudius say this, in this way?" than to ask, "Why does Claudius say this?" And they are likely to recognise that Shakespeare often makes his words and sentences do more than one job at a time: "This expresses the

speaker's anxiety to come to the point", one might say of Claudius's "to the quick of the ulcer", "but it also suggests Hamlet's return to the corrupt court of Denmark".

The sense of the play as a made thing—a theatrical artefact and an organisation of metaphor—does not invalidate an approach through "character". On the contrary, some of the best answers are in terms of character; and those who would rather talk of people than of words, images and ideas must not be discouraged. But the "made thing" is properly distinguished from the "historical report" and the "slice of life". And perhaps the most misunderstood aspect of Shakespeare is the part played by theatrical convention; a fault most readily corrected by fuller use of such work as M. C. Bradbrook's, Ronald Watkins's and Granville Barker's. It is still true, however, that the plays are made primarily out of the poetry; and those candidates are fortunate who have learned to recognise that the detail often contributes to the large design.

2. Section A

Candidates are asked to paraphrase, annotate and place two passages from the set plays. The average performance under all three heads is distinctly higher now than in 1950; comment is not neglected and contexts are given briefly. The improvement is partly owed to the changed form of Section A. The three-line "contexts" of 1950 restricted scope for comment and encouraged that kind of knowledge of the play which can be expressed in a scene-by-scene account of the story. Under the old system only the weaker candidates were apt to attempt the optional paraphrase. The newer form has proved to be a more satisfactory test and there is no longer an arbitrary lack of correlation between marks won on the two sections. Small rubric changes, meant to guide the candidate more fully without intimidating him, have not appreciably affected the answers.

Paraphrase

The evidence of the scripts suggests the continuing need for a comprehension test, and the paraphrase seems to be the best available form. Tests which ask for comment on italicised words or for answers to specific questions would prove too exacting for the average candidate, and impose the examiner's preconceptions without necessarily discovering the candidates' interests. In practice the paraphrase marks endorse those won on the rest of the paper; but they run at a slightly higher average while covering a much wider span—from nought to maximum.

About a third of the paraphrases reveal an almost total incapacity for understanding even the general sense of the text. Thus one candidate rendered (f) 3-5: "I will not break my oath to this beautiful one I love, even though the earth swallows us up or we are drowned in the depth of the sea"; and another gave (b) 5-6 as: "This single life, the King's, must protect itself from all dangers; mainly because the welfare of so many rest upon it." Both these candidates managed to pass on the whole paper, but

many lost critical marks through similar errors. More performances are marred by mistakes owed to careless reading than by those owed to ignorance of a difficult word ("carbonado", "casque" or "aweless").

The commonest faults stem from evasion of difficulties. The worst candidates, of course, alter the easy words and retain the hard ones. But some of the better scripts offer word by word substitution that fails to clarify sense, syntax or argument: "The unique life is obliged with all the defence of the spirit to protect itself from annoyance." Unlike the version already quoted, this one is uncommitted—it is impossible to tell if the candidate has understood the drift. The précis supplied by another is more useful: "Even the private citizen is bound to look after his own welfare"; but this is as distant as the other is close and it wins clarity at the expense of detail. The apt precision and economy is exemplified in: "It is the duty of each private individual to do the utmost in his power to keep himself from harm" (see Appendix 1). "Each private individual" retains something of the tautological force of "single and peculiar life", "utmost in his power" is not too dilute a rendering of "strength and armour of the mind", and "harm" recognises the original strength of "noyance".

Although ungrammatical and incoherent sentences are mostly found in the poorer scripts, it still happens that an otherwise competent candidate will leave sentences in his paraphrase that can only be understood (if at all) by a reader who remembers the original. Thus a generally satisfactory candidate writes: "Therefore she who was at one time our sister, and is now our queen, joint ruler of this warlike state we have taken as our wife even though it were as if our joy was overcome." Sometimes the fault comes from trying to do in passing the sort of explanatory work that belongs to notes: "This noble lady, whom formerly I called sister by virtue of the fact that she was the wife of my brother, our much-mourned king, now reigns over this great kingdom as my royal consort." Others, however, contrive to explain without digressing: "The woman who was the wife of my brother has now become my wife and my queen, and shares with me the ruling of this warlike kingdom."

Before attempting a passage candidates would do well to ask themselves why it has been set for paraphrase. Which words are used in a sense other than the modern? Where is the syntax hard to sort out? Are there any unexpected shifts of thought? Any deliberate or accidental ambiguities? Once the difficulties have been located the paraphrase should be designed to solve all that are not more conveniently discussed in the comments.

Any grammatical and intelligible rendering which solves the more obvious difficulties of wording, syntax and thought, is highly valued. Only the more ambitious need attempt the refinements. The most distinguished paraphrases interpret the rhetoric as well as the sense, express the mood as well as the thought. But this appears to be a skill only within the reach of a gifted few, and it would be unjust and unwise to frame a rubric designed to encourage it. Nevertheless, two of the more refined techniques deserve notice—the handling of figurative language and the use of modern idiom.

Metaphors are hard to recast and there are no firm rules. Sometimes the vehicle needs explaining, sometimes the *tenor* and sometimes both. In (b), for example, some neat and satisfactory paraphrases simply pursued the tenor of the "gulf" image: "The death of a king is not an isolated event but involves the fortunes of all who have connections with him." This is very good, but it could have been derived from the "wheel" image alone and it is not clear that "gulf" has been understood. Others seemed to keep the image faintly alive but not explicit: "When a monarch dies, he does not die alone, but draws down with him all who are near and connected." A few made use of the passively metaphoric word "engulf". But the best in this instance explained the vehicle by giving "whirlpool" for "gulf" and not leaving it to be misunderstood as "chasm" or even (in one case) as "bay": "A king's death... carries many to destruction, like a whirlpool pulling things to its centre."

The "wheel" image is less precise and more difficult to handle. In practice the majority of good paraphrases did not name the wheel or rationalise the comparison: "The King is the very height of power and centre of importance and thousands of ordinary subjects are connected by their dependence upon him." A minority, however, retained the wheel successfully: "Or it may be compared with a massive wheel set on the summit of a high mountain, to the spoke of which a multitude of lesser objects are jointed or attached. When this wheel falls all these small and trivial adjuncts are caught up in its noisy ruin." The advantage of this method is that it allows immediate attention to words like "mortised", "adjoined", "annexment" and "boisterous", which are apt to get lost in interpretations of the tenor. There is no reason why the very best paraphrases should not combine both approaches: "The King is the very height of power and centre of importance—he may be compared with a massive wheel set on the summit of a high mountain." The commonest fault is to confuse approaches, however, as in this muddle of wheels, mountains and men: "The King is like a wheel on top of a mountain to which smaller objects are attached, lacking their own individuality." Almost all candidates, incidentally, failed to see that in a prose version it is the fall of the wheel and not the wheel itself which is like the "cease of majesty".

Modern idioms and colloquialisms are most used by the better candidates. Occasionally they are almost essential. The "liver" of (e) looks odd in modern prose and many quite properly changed it to "heart": "If his love for her was ever truly heartfelt." But usually the modern phrase is meant to refresh the style and quicken the pace of the prose. It has to be chosen tactfully, to make an impression consistent with the general effect. The expressions offered for "th' casque to th' cushion" of (d) included, "the sword to the pen", "the trenches to parliament" and "tin-hat to bowler". Each shows understanding of the text and each was endorsed by a note explaining "casque" and "cushion" correctly. But re-writing the speech as if it were part of a modern play does not entail giving that play a modern setting (which is a different exercise, however interesting and use-

ful); and while the bowler might be tolerated in a good paraphrase it is an offence against decorum and would spoil an otherwise excellent one. "Decorum" is indeed a word that the most ambitious candidate does well to keep in mind. The more vulgar colloquialisms are better admitted to the servants' speeches than to the general's. There is a tact to be observed in their development even in (c), however: "chopped him up like a chunk of meat" is perfectly admissible, but "our general flirts with him, makes eyes at him as if he were his sweetheart" while it shows insight, leaves little room for "sanctifies" and for the implication that Aufidius played the role of courtly lover with a touch of religious devotion. These subtler points are discussed because they clearly interest the best candidates, but high marks can be won by those who do not attend to them, but are content to elucidate difficulties in a style free from rhetorical colour.

Examiners do not judge from a "model" version but allow the candidates to establish between themselves the standard of what is possible in the set time. Appendix I includes a selection of paraphrases illustrating a variety of approaches, merits and defects.

Comment

The 1957 form of the "Comment" rubric was meant to suggest approaches without imposing a drill. There are those who prefer a drill and try to pick up marks on each passage under each of the four suggested heads. But the rubric does allow a candidate to follow his bent and win high marks with comments confined perhaps to metaphoric organisation, to fine points of character analysis or to the movement and cadence of the verse; his first interest may be in the impact of the speech in the theatre, or it may be in the glimpse it affords into some aspect of Elizabethan civilisation. No two passages offer quite the same opportunities and no two readers are likely to share quite the same response. It is still possible, however, to make a few generalisations before looking at examples.

The large tasks of "comment" are to supplement the explanatory work of the paraphrase, to bring out qualities in the passage that the paraphrase fails to suggest, and to indicate the function of the passage in the play. Notes expanding or endorsing paraphrase renderings are often supplied; some are useful ("dole" is an old word meaning "grief"; "close" here suggests "secret"), but some are needless and even silly ("a dirge is a sad song"; "profound" means "deep"). Most passages include a few words whose difference from modern usage deserves comment: "success" in (e) means "sequel", "fast" in (f) means "close". Comment on these words is less likely to be superfluous than on those like "carbonado" or "weal", which can be directly rendered in paraphrase. Many candidates are reticent about obscurities in their text—fearing perhaps to expose their own deficiencies. But if a difficulty has been masked or evaded in paraphrase it is to the candidate's credit if he says so himself. The last lines of (d) are obscure and possibly corrupt; a candidate is expected to notice the obscurity without necessarily speculating on the corruption. The word "jet" in (g) is an odd form of "jut", but both those who got it right and those

who got it wrong in paraphrase often failed to make a comment. Again, where one interpretation has been preferred to another the candidate does well to say so: "I think 'fortune' ((d) 4) means 'success' and refers to Coriolanus's victories, but it might mean 'luck' and refer to the complacency of the ordinary citizen." Other kinds of explanation of diction entail discussion of subject-matter. They should be brief, relevant and confined to less obvious points. A "pass" candidate writes: "The Queen, whose name was Gertrude, was really Claudius's sister-in-law." A "good" candidate uses the point: "'Sister' serving for 'sister-in-law' reminds us that at that time the marriage would indeed seem 'incestuous' to Hamlet."

The last example shows that explanation often merges into interpretation and appreciation, and the different tasks of "comment" cannot always be firmly distinguished. There is no need for a candidate to write explicitly about what his paraphrase fails to convey, although some do so very successfully: "I have mentioned the marriage in my first sentence, but in the original Claudius manages to apologise for it before he actually speaks about it." It is enough that there should be an awareness of the effect of the passage as well as an understanding of its prose sense, for example, this on passage (e): "After the hard accusations of Claudio, after the unpaternal railings of Leonato, this speech has a very soothing effect upon reader or audience. . . . The diction throughout is superbly euphonic." This is not the kind of generic compliment that would serve for any passage ("Shakespeare's choice of imagery and diction is masterly")—"soothing" and "superbly euphonic" are felicitous and precise. The same candidate uses the word "smooth" with exactly the right implication about passage (a): "Shakespeare. . . wants to convince his audience that Claudius's 'smooth' exterior conceals something loathsome." This is right, while the sentence supplied in another script, "Shakespeare's blank verse here is smooth and regular", is simply uncomprehending.

Again, one sees that comments appreciating the tones and effect of a passage shade into comment on its dramatic function. A phrase such as that already quoted, "Shakespeare wants to convince his audience that . . .", is usually a sign that the candidate is alive to the playwright's craft. But equally good results sometimes follow from a pursuit of the character's motives—"Claudius wants to convince his court that he and Gertrude have acted responsibly." The limitations of the "character" approach, however, are most felt when the speakers are minor characters or when the play is a comedy or romance. Some passages reveal or betray the speaker's character, some the character of another, but others are most directly about the dramatic society at large or about the moral order that seems to control the design of the play. For example, the better candidates writing about (f) noticed the role of chance and providence in *The Winter's Tale*, bringing love and loyalty to prevail, in spite of setbacks, over the destructive effects of "passion". Those who made (f) an occasion for discussing Florizel merely, quickly ran out of ideas; one was tricked into saying that Florizel "always uses poetic language which is very beautiful throughout". Perhaps something could be made of Florizel's readiness

both to defy "Fortune" and to trust it, but it is not easy to vindicate the claim that his character, as such, supplies the "most interesting" element in his speech.

In spite of these qualifications about character analysis, it is still true that the best answers are concerned with human rather than narrowly aesthetic values and with the drama rather than the allegory. Few, however, can be faulted for excessively subtle abstraction. The commonest faults are owed to carelessness, ignorance, insensibility and banality. Perhaps candidates should ask themselves in what ways the play would be poorer if the passage under discussion were omitted; and they might go on to make about it points of a sort they themselves have found helpful in the course of study. Under examination conditions points are apt to be made in a random order and this need not matter. But some attempt should be made to keep some perspective by distinguishing big points from little ones. One candidate gave five sentences explaining "auspices" as the "entrails of a bull" and only one to Claudius's situation in the first court scene.

Other observations about "comment" will be found with examples in Appendix II.

Context

The passages are rarely misplaced and the work is usually done in the prescribed "two or three sentences". It is still possible to win extra marks by precision. The basic form of a fully satisfactory answer is, "by whom, to whom, in whose presence, on what occasion and where". But this is not a drill: special cases disturb the pattern, and each condition (particularly the "where") is only important if Shakespeare has made it so. Soliloquies and quasi-soliloquies (like d) prove hard to place; the "to whom" can be a trap if a long aside is included or the address switched in the middle. But the 1957 selection was straightforward. The "exact context" of (a) was supplied in many scripts, but this is exemplary: "Claudius is taking up the reins of government in his first speech, opening the second scene. Gertrude and Hamlet are with the court. We have seen the ghost for the first time but have yet to learn of the murder." Here it is convenient to specify the scene but usually it is enough to indicate the situation; candidates should not try to give a reference, but sometimes it helps to give the phase of the play or to place a small incident by reference to a large episode. Thus (g) was sufficiently placed with: "A. is Elizabeth and B. the Duchess of York. They speak in the presence of the young Duke of York and of the messenger who has just brought news of the imprisonment of Rivers, Vaughan and Grey. York is to be taken into sanctuary. This is the middle of the play and Richard's bid for the throne is well under way." The standard of precision is set by the better candidates, not by the examiners, and for *Richard III* it was high. The samples quoted above are from distinguished answers, of course, and a pass can be won by a candidate content with: (passage f), "This was said by Florizel to Camillo near the end of the play." Some supply the quotation and comment which properly belongs to section (ii),

but there is bound to be some overlap and it is not counted a fault. Candidates who are confident that they know exactly where a passage comes from should take care to leave no room for doubt in their answers: several "contexts" sampled in Appendix II are deficient in some essential in spite of their fullness.

3. Section B

The best answers offered in this section continue to be remarkable and the worst, silly. This would probably still be so even if all candidates succeeded in doing themselves justice. But there must be many whose understanding and potential ability does not register in their scripts, and some generalisations may be hazarded in the hope of liberating them from false preconceptions.

The story-tellers (about a quarter of the entry) offer answers that could be derived from a comic version of Lamb's *Tales*. Some perhaps could be made to feel that they are dealing with a playwright if not with a great dramatic poet. But it is probable that limited technique is the sign of more fundamental limitations and one fears that some would have nothing left to say if they abstained from simple narrative. A few salute the question and scrape a pass, but the majority must be "allowed ordinary".

Naïve plot-summaries are rarer in middle-grade scripts, but many share with the story-tellers two limitations of approach: they frame their answers in narrative order and they treat the play as though it were recast by Shaw into prose argument. Neither limitation, however, need be disastrous. There are those who plod through the plot, keeping the question more or less in mind; but there are also those who dance, pursuing the question with spirit and skill through a bright scenario. There are many who deprive the play of all its energies of language; but there are a few who, while neglecting the poetry, contrive to display the human tensions of the plot with wit and insight—colour-blind but still responsive to the draughtsmanship.

The most refreshing answers show the candidate exercising his own specific talent upon his experience of the play; a talent which may be literary, histrionic, reflective, didactic, satirical or even whimsical. But the most refreshing answers are not necessarily the very best. The most distinguished candidates reveal a surprising critical maturity, compounding and controlling several abilities. And there are candidates without unusual gifts who win a Good or even Very Good grade by their thorough covering of a topic and by the good sense and relevance of their answers.

The better routine answers are more likely to take the form of argument than narrative exposition. But argument too has its dangers. The forensic approach is more suited to some questions than others and although it is rarely tedious it is often shrill. The candidate with a gift for special pleading should attend to the awkward facts as well as the tractable, and not be one-sided or over-state his case. Virtuosity may sometimes vindicate an account that is far from judicial, but however positive the judgement it should appear that the evidence has at some stage been fairly examined.

It is probable that an answer is most likely to be highly valued if it attend, in order of importance and not in narrative order, to those elements in the play that the question throws into relief.

The best answers give the impression of deriving from an alert reading of the play and not from a passive reading of one or two critics, but it often happens that the influence of a critic is most fertile when least noticeable—when his ideas have been assimilated and his methods independently mastered.

A brief analysis of the 1957 Section B answers will be found with examples in Appendix III.

PART II

1. Paraphrase

Most of the examples are from the scripts of Grade 2 or Grade 3 candidates. None are faultless but all have qualities that are highly valued. The various candidates have been identified by letters from A–W which enable the curious to compare one part of a performance with another, but the arrangement is designed to facilitate comparisons between different candidates doing the same job. The space allowed to samples largely reflects the popularity of the passage, but some samples are extended for various special reasons.

Question 1

(a) The style of A is mannered throughout his script. His version here is unusual in that it sticks to the original syntax fairly closely. The phrasing is often clumsy but shows a will to be precise—"one eye seeking a favourable omen". B is looser by comparison but more fluent. His tautologies ("sad and unhappy", "bold and reckless") mimic the rhetoric at some cost to the sense. C is less ambitious and his is a representative "good average" answer.

(b) D negotiates the metaphors quite skilfully in this passage while keeping firm hold of the argument. It rates "Very Good" in spite of the awkward last sentence. E is approaching *précis*, but allowable in view of his comments (see Appendix II).

(c) F and G offer almost equally satisfactory versions. Both may be wrong about the senators asking no questions, but F has the advantage with "hatless" which he surrenders later to G's "pull the porter's ears". The bracketed words in G's version were accidentally omitted and have been supplied. Notice F's unnecessary "men of power" for "senators".

(d) H and I make excellent attempts at a very difficult passage. The difficulty challenged alert attention and there were few sloppy answers. The versions differ in their renderings of the second sentence and the last two. But both are responsible tries. "Carry his honours even" was nicely given by one candidate as "carry his distinctions with equanimity".

(e) A's prose makes rather heavy weather of this passage—"every constituent of her existence", but there are some felicitous touches (from "beautiful" to "vivacious", "tarnished honour") and the whole is carefully wrought. Like most comedy passages this was usually carelessly done.

(f) C shows some feeling for the mood of the passage without seeming to strive for effect. He is not quite precise ("glean'd" gets lost) and there is a misunderstanding of "her need". But the tenor is nicely controlled and the prose has a clarity far above the average for this piece.

(g) The language of *Richard III* is most difficult to paraphrase usefully.

J's version was one of the best of a poor set, but it has been patched and edited here, with some use made of phrases from other scripts. As it is, the second sentence is too specific and the third too close to be explanatory (why is the "throne" "innocent" and "aweless"?). "The end of all" is more apocalyptic than "all this" suggests.

APPENDIX I (Paraphrase)

Candidate A

1 (a). Therefore I have, as if with a joy proceeding from sorrow, with one eye seeking a favourable omen while the other droops in the dejection of mourning, with the foretaste of gladness in funeral and the echoes of grief in marriage, and balancing sadness with equivalent joy, married her who, formerly my sister (in law), is now become my queen and, as such, my partner in the control of this militant nation. Neither have I neglected to consult your wise opinions, which have fully approved all stages of this matter. I thank you all for this assistance. The next matter is familiar to you: young Fortinbras, having a poor opinion of our importance, or considering that the decease of my beloved brother has damaged and disrupted the smooth running of the country, combined with a desire to further his ambition, has not ceased from bothering us with notes demanding the return of those territories which were forfeited by his father to my most honourable brother, according to the appropriate legal covenants which he had entered into.

Candidate B

1 (a). It has pleased our royal person to take the hand in marriage of one who was of late our dear sister-in-law, and who is now our queen, sharing with us the royal throne of this great country. In taking this blessed step our marital joys and happiness have been commingled with, and tempered by, the sad and unhappy remembrance of our valiant brother's death. But we have been careful to observe a sense of dignified proportion in these matters, for we have neither been too jocund in our happiness, nor too mournful in our sorrow. Moreover, in taking our dear sister to wife, we sought for and obtained your gracious approval—which we set at the highest worth. We are grateful for the part which you have played in these proceedings.

But now our attention must be focused on more weighty matters of state. As you are aware, the bold and reckless Fortinbras, thinking our military power to be only slight, or perhaps hoping that the death of our brother would plunge our nation into anarchy and confusion, has—prompted no doubt by the feckless ambitions of one so young and inexperienced—persistently been clamouring for the return of those territories which were forfeited in all legality by his father, to our late brother.

Candidate C

1 (a). Thus we have married Gertrude, who was formerly our sister-in-law but has now become our queen and our partner in ruling this country well prepared for war; but we have done this with frustrated pleasure, as you might say, celebrating while we mourned and mourning at our wedding, balancing equal amounts of pleasure and grief. In doing this, too, we have not neglected to ask for your mature judgements, which, without any pressure, have been completely in favour of all our actions; and we wish to thank you for all that you have done.

Next, we must consider a matter which is already common knowledge: the young Norwegian prince Fortinbras, either because he has a low opinion of our military strength and skill, or because he thinks that our country has become disorganized and unprepared as a result of the recent death of my brother, and in any case hoping to profit by his action, has, as we might have expected, troubled us with notes demanding that we should give back to him all the territory which our very brave brother won in a perfectly legal way from Fortinbras' father.

Candidate D

1 (b). We will make all necessary arrangements for ourselves. It is a sacred duty to fear for the preservation of the welfare of those many thousands of people who depend for their whole livelihood upon your Majesty.

B. It is the duty of each private individual to do the utmost in his power to keep himself from harm. How much more then must he whose wellbeing supports and safeguards the lives of many others beside himself! The death of a King does not concern merely his own person, for like a whirlpool it sucks down irresistibly all the objects around it. It is like a huge wheel fastened to the top of the highest mountain, to the great spokes of which thousands of smaller things are firmly attached. When this wheel falls, every little thing which is fixed to it, even the tiniest, is involved in the noisy disaster. It is impossible for the King to have private griefs, for all his people take part in them.

C. Prepare yourselves quickly for this voyage, for we wish to lessen the powers of the reason for this terror, who is now so dangerously at large.

Candidate E

1 (b). We ourselves will provide a solution to this problem. It is our moral duty to protect the many whose lives and fortunes depend upon your Majesty.

B. The Private individual is under an obligation to use all his intellectual powers in defending himself; but this is much more of an obligation in the case of one upon whose welfare the lives of many are dependent. A king's death is not a matter isolated from the affairs of others. On the contrary, his dependents are bound to fall when he does. The destinies of many lesser men are bound up in that of the king, and each of these lesser men must suffer in the general collapse of fortunes. Thus the king's troubles are not his alone, but are shared by his people.

C. Please prepare for the voyage which is to take place very soon, for I intend to still this fear which at present has so much influence.

Candidate F

1 (c). To tell the truth he was definitely too strong for Aufidius; when they were fighting outside Corioli, Coriolanus slashed him and cut him up as if he were a chunk of meat.

B. And if he had been in a man-eating frame of mind, he would have cooked and eaten him too.

A. But tell us your news more fully.

C. Well, the people inside make as much fuss of him as if he were descended directly from Mars, the god of war; they let him sit at the top of the table and the men of power, without questioning him on any matter, stand hatless before him in respect. Aufidius himself, our leader, treats him as lovingly as he would his bride, as though his very hand could bestow grace and blessings, and listens attentively and appreciatively to all Coriolanus has to say. But the most important item of news is that our leader's power has been sliced in two, and Aufidius retains only half the power he had formerly, for the other half has been given to Coriolanus, since the whole gathering was unanimous in its wish to allow it. So now he says he will advance to Rome and defy the keeper of the gates; he will cut down everything that lies in his path, and leave destruction in his wake.

Candidate G

1 (c). To be quite honest about it he was far too good a fighter to be matched by him; when they fought outside the walls of Corioli he beat him and slashed him as if he had been a piece of meat.

B. If he had been inclined towards cannibalism he could have cooked and eaten him as well.

A. But go on, give us more of your news.

C. Why, they are making as much fuss of him here as if he had been not only a good soldier but the very son of Mars and was to inherit his powers. He is sat down at the head of the table and the senators do not presume to bother him with questions but stand humbly before him in silence. Our own general is as friendly and loving to him as if he was his mistress, holds his hand as if it were holy and could give blessings, and gives his whole attention to whatever he says. But the most important part of the news is that the power of our general has (been) cut and is only half what it was before, for the other half has been given to this newcomer by the unanimous (consent) of all present. He says he will march right up to the gates of Rome so he can pull the porter's ears. He will destroy it all, cutting down all opposition so that he has a straight, clear path before him.

Candidate H

1 (d). To begin with, he served them well. However, he was unable to bear his glories with due humility. Either it was pride, which so commonly corrupts men of well-being; or perhaps wrong judgement, so that he was not able to put his own talents to good use; or perhaps it was his character, so that he could not be other than what he was. He could not change from command in war to politics, but dictated in times of peace with the same despotism and firmness as he used in war. One of these defects—he is touched with all of them (although I should do him justice enough not to say all)—has caused him to be feared, thus hated, and therefore banished. However, he has the ability to prevent this, even whilst it happens. All our merits are adjudged by time, and power (which is full of vanity) cannot end its days better than in a parliament seat, there to praise its own deeds.

Candidate I

1 (d). First of all he served the Romans with nobility but he could not bear himself with modesty under the fresh honours which they bestowed upon him. I do not know whether it was pride, which during our daily lives often mars the fortunes of the successful man; whether it was his own misjudgement in failing to utilise or exploit the chances which came his way; or whether it was his own character which could not alter or adapt itself easily from the position of general to that of consul, but attempted to control affairs in time of peace even in the same manner and with the same despotism as he had formerly directed matters in time of war; but one of these, for he has traces of them all—no, not all, for I dare acquit him to such an extent—made him feared, consequently hated, and ultimately resulted in his banishment. However, he has one great quality which discountenances my accusations making them seem worthless—and that is his prowess in war. So our good qualities depend upon the way in which the public interprets them, and those who are powerful even though they are pleased with themselves, have not a more certain way to destruction than to boast of their own accomplishments.

Candidate A

1 (e). When he hears that her death was instantaneous upon her hearing his denunciation, the image of her living personality will pleasantly steal into his imaginative contemplation and every constituent of her existence will appear more beautiful, more touching, more fragile and vivacious, in his reflective mind's eye, than they did when she was actually alive. Then he will grieve, if ever there was in him any true affection for her, and he will regret that he ever denounced her even though he believed what he said to be correct. If you permit this to happen you may be quite sure that the course of events will make things turn out better than I can definitely prophesy; but in any case it must happen that the belief that the lady is dead will put a check to consideration of her scandal. If matters do not fall out satisfactorily, you can put her away, as is fitting for one with tarnished honour, in some religious retreat where she will be safe from prying eyes, malicious tongues, inquisitive minds and slanderous injuries.

Candidate C

1 (f). No, I will not act contrary to the vows I have made to this beautiful girl I love, even to gain the throne of Bohemia, or all the dignity which accompanies that position, or everything that the sun shines upon, the ground keeps well buried or the deepest oceans conceal in their unexplored depths. Since this is so, and since you have always been the respected friend of my father, I beg of you that when he notices my absence—for, indeed, I have no intention of returning to him again—you will try to moderate his anger, by giving him good advice. I will continue to struggle with Fate to win my future happiness. I will tell you this much, and you may pass it on to my father: I am setting out to sea with the girl I cannot marry on land in Bohemia. One of my ships is at anchor very near here, and although it was not intended for any plan of this kind, it will serve very well to carry out what Perdita wishes. I am not going to bother to tell you in what direction I mean to sail, and therefore you will not be able to claim any information on that subject.

Candidate J

1 (g). Alas, I see the ruin of my family! Cruel Richard has now seized for prey the harmless subject. Insolent tyranny begins to threaten the innocent and unregarded throne. Welcome destruction, bloody days and massacre! I can see the end of all this charted out.

How many cursed, troublous and quarrelsome days have my eyes seen! My husband lost his life in aspiring to the crown, and my sons were often cast up and then thrust down, for me to rejoice in their success and grieve for their misfortune. And then, when my lineage held the throne of England and the civil wars against the house of Lancaster were successfully passed by, the conquerors fell out between themselves—brother against brother, blood against blood, the line upon itself. O, let this outrageous and frenzied violence end its cursed wrath, or let me suffer death that I may look on it no more!

2. Comment and context

Comedy presents most problems here, and comments on (e) and (f) have been more fully sampled than the others. The “context” is included only when it is useful for the report.

Question 1

(a) K elaborates the main point and does it well—the repetitions are hardly blemishes. L says more in shorter space. Both pack some comment into “context”, but L’s placing is more accurate in spite of K’s allusion to the ambassadors.

(b) Both E and M were highly rated, but they share the common fault of confining the speeches to a character-function. Very few observed that these images of the King at the centre of power do something to strengthen the structure of the play. E’s comment on the detail is excellent and justifies the method of her paraphrase (see Appendix I). M is a representative note-form answer, with some notes superfluous. M’s “context” is briefer than E’s but more informative.

(c) The standard set by candidates on this passage was high. F is excellent and won full marks, but few have the skill, knowledge and leisure to be so thorough. G is a more routine “good”. (Compare paraphrases in Appendix I.)

(d) H and I are both “very good” with the advantage going to I for his keen comparison of food metaphors. I’s “context” is more precise. Both

see that this speech illuminates two characters, but neither says enough about its value and limitations as a definitive judgement of Coriolanus. (Compare paraphrases in Appendix I.)

(e) Many wrote only one sentence of comment here. A takes the opportunity for some anti-clerical rhetoric, which might have been in place about (say) Ophelia’s funeral but looks odd here. A might usefully have asked himself if the allegations he makes are endorsed by the tone of the speech or by the other effects in the play. B is one of the few to refer to stage convention, but even he scarcely recognises the conventional role of the Friar. K’s lively comment is marred by his misinterpretation of “interest in his liver”. All three were quite highly rated. No one remarked that Shakespeare has here set an expectation about Claudio’s conduct which (pace B) is sharply disappointed. Some called the Friar “Laurence” without making the apt comparison with *Romeo and Juliet*. A’s “context” would be better if it specified those present.

(f) This passage too was neglected under “comment”. The four samples display some of the possibilities. H is wrong to render “Bohemia” as “Polixenes”—vigilant as he is, he misses the force of “thereat”. A reader unfamiliar with the play would learn a lot about its character (as opposed to its story) from N; but “rides” is misunderstood and the handling of language is not sensitive—a few sentences about the “lovely language” have been cut after the quotation. O is very observant about words, and rates “very good” in spite of her neglect of other aspects. P shows a different kind of gift—a fine responsiveness to the moral allegory.

(g) Those who tried this passage usually knew enough about the history in the play to make fairly full comments on its persons, events and patterns. Few commented on those qualities of the language which make paraphrase difficult—the amplification and the tautology. L is well above average. He includes some specific comments as well as some which would serve for any speech in the play. His “context” is remarkably full.

APPENDIX II (Comment and Context)

Candidate K

1 (a) (ii). This passage—possibly more than any other in the play—illustrates the superb, kingly confidence of Claudius in explaining an extremely delicate situation. He never makes one slip: the kingly tone, vocabulary (“our”) and bearing are all there, and the extract is evidence of the truly monarchic qualities which Claudius—although a murderer—possesses. There is a wonderfully calm, lucid sweep about the opening nine lines which is only too well pointed by the fact that no paraphrase could ever hope to catch the confident, poised, tone. Claudius’ situation, as I have said, is at least “delicate”, yet never once does his fluency or self-possession falter. His speech could have been revealingly lame, but the vigorous and practical way in which he explains the Fortinbras situation is such that one feels he is in complete command of his audience. Having “dealt with”—and this is not an exaggerated phrase—having dealt with his incestuous marriage he is magnificently poised and calm, there is a pause, and then: “For all, our thanks.” In these four words is summed up the whole tone of the passage: aloof, competent, self-confident, above all, kingly. This short passage gives some indication of the ruthless efficiency which Hamlet (who is listening) will have to face.

(iii) Spoken by Claudius, at the beginning of the action, as a "scene-setting" device to an audience of courtiers, which includes Voltinmand and Cornelius, who are immediately sent to inform 'old Norway' of Fortinbras' preparations.

Candidate L

1 (a) (ii). The smooth plausibility of the villain is apparent in his careful use of antithesis and in his praise for the brother he has murdered—"most valiant", "dear brother". While talking about his marriage he obviously feels he is skating on thin ice. This is reflected in the elaborate formality of his diction. When changing to the subject of Fortinbras, however, his manner becomes easier—he is the business-like king dealing with worldly affairs. This scene of diplomacy is a stark contrast to the raw cold and grim horror of the battlement scene that has preceded it.

(iii) It is the second scene of the first act and we find Claudius apparently delivering his first speech to his counsellors from his usurped throne. He is uneasy because he has to explain why he married the elder Hamlet's wife Gertrude, and so soon after his death. Hamlet has not yet heard of the appearance of his father's ghost (which Horatio has now seen), and he sits apart in melancholy fashion, still clothed in black.

Candidate E

1 (b) (ii). The speakers in this passage are A, Guildenstern; B, Rosencrantz; and C, Claudius, and its chief value is as a revelation of the two courtiers. As often pointed out, Shakespeare's characters who "hunt in couples" usually do so to make up for their lack of individuality. The speeches of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in this passage illustrate this truth. What one states briefly the other echoes in detail, and neither shows any trait which could distinguish him from his friend. The one characteristic which both display here, as everywhere else in the play, is obsequiousness, particularly with regard to the King and Queen. Here it takes the form of gross exaggeration. It is surprising that the intelligent Claudius does not despise them as much as we do. His forbearance in ignoring their flattery suits well with his general politeness all through the play; he seems anxious to gain the affection of all his subjects.

In style this passage is remarkable chiefly for its use of imagery. "Armour of the mind" is a most telling metaphor, for it implies the need for defences against physical attack. The simile "like a gulf" ("gulf" being the Elizabethan word for "whirlpool") is equally evocative and is admirably short. The metaphor of the "massy wheel" is also effective, but it is somewhat too lengthy and the meaning is not clear. What is the wheel doing on the mountain? The shafts of the wheel are "mortised" to the centre of it—but these are part of the wheel itself. Finally, Claudius' splendid metaphor of putting fetters on fear as if it were a dangerous criminal is both apt and striking.

One of the most striking qualities as regards the diction of this passage is the use of the abstract for the concrete—a figure of speech of which Shakespeare is very fond. "The cease of majesty" sounds much more impressive than "the death of a king."

(iii) This passage comes from the scene which begins with Claudius informing the two courtiers of his plan to send Hamlet to England, because of his madness and the consequent danger to his own person and his position as king. The speeches of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are in answer to this announcement.

Candidate M

1 (b) (ii). The passage shows the obsequious nature of the two courtiers, ready to flatter the king to the top of their bent. No wonder Hamlet mistrusts them—when they try to be friendly with the king, his enemy. Claudius has been frightened by the play which Hamlet had had enacted and determines to send Hamlet to his death in England.

Imagery. The use of "armour" of the mind is metaphorically effective, as showing resistance to harm. The simile of the whirl-pool ("gulf") is commonplace but apt. The "massy wheel" on the "mount" is an extraordinary metaphor but the picture of a huge wheel falling and dragging all with it is evocative and suitable to the flattering style of the speaker.

"Fettering" a person restrains him and thus the use of the word to mean stop the threat of harm.

Diction. "Peculiar" = individual. "We" used in sense of royal plural. "Noyance" = harm, now obsolete. "Spirit" = life. "General groan"—one in which many join. "Gulf" = whirlpool. "Massy" = massive. "Mortised" comes from the mortise or hole by which the wheel was joined to its axle. "Ruin" has a hint of the literal sense from "ruina" = downfall. "Lives" does not agree with "depends and rests". Supply "there depends".

Style. Use of alliteration is conspicuous, e.g. "fetters", "fear", "free-footed" and "massy", "summit", "mount". This is courtly speech.

(iii) Guildenstern and Rosencrantz are being sent by the king, Claudius, with Hamlet to England. Claudius has been alarmed by the play and wishes Hamlet to be killed, although Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are unaware of the contents of the commission.

Candidate G

1 (c) (ii). These words are ideally adapted to the speakers, the kitchen servants. Their images are taken from cooking; even the description of the curtailment of the general's powers sounds as if it was a loaf being cut. The 3rd servant particularly notices that Coriolanus has been put in the highest place, as a waiter would. There is a homely vigour in the words and in such expressions as "sowl the porter of Rome gates by th'ears".

Mars—god of war. Carbonado—a joint of meat to be roasted over an open fire.

The servants are to some extent humorous characters and after finding out how important the visitor is, change their former opinions promptly and, declaring they knew all along, after preliminary qualms, praise him to the detriment of Aufidius their master.

(iii) A and B are the first two servants in Aufidius' kitchen while C is a third one who also waits at table. Coriolanus in disguise had come to the house and the servants tried to turn him out, providing one of the few comedy scenes. Aufidius enters and Coriolanus reveals himself, offers his services, is joyfully accepted and given joint command. The third servant is reporting what is happening after they have left the kitchen. It contrasts with Aufidius' former threats and later jealousy. He cannot bear being inferior, and treated as such, every time he and Coriolanus meet.

Candidate F

1 (c) (ii). This is a casual conversation, full of colloquialisms, which reflect the Elizabethan people even though the play is set in Ancient Rome. It also serves as an exposition, as in its humorous way it tells us how Coriolanus is received by Aufidius and his nobles, and what he is going to do. Servants are talking and do not think it disrespectful to compare their general to a "carbonado", or a chunk of meat prepared for cooking on coals, and they say he was scotch'd, that is cut or grazed, and notch'd—like a stick that has notches or pieces cut out of it. "Scotched" is not a common word but we find it in *Macbeth* also, "we have scotch'd the snake, not killed it". The discovery of the Cannibals in the Caribean and other places was of great interest to the Elizabethans, who were interested in all strange and foreign things; here the simile of a lump of beef is continued. "Son and heir to Mars" has several times been said of Coriolanus; Aufidius himself, on discovering Coriolanus's identity calls him "Thou son of Mars" and Titus Lartius too gives him that title. Removing the hat was a sign of great respect in Shakespeare's day, and so the servants marvel that this stranger should be so honoured by the leading men of their country. Aufidius too, treats him as if he were endowed with divine power, "sanctifies himself with his hand"; continuing the "carbonado" simile perhaps, they say Aufidius is "cut in the middle", that is, that he has divided his command with Coriolanus: he says, after welcoming his former enemy, "I give you the one-half of my command", which he later comes to regret. "Sowl" means to "catch" or "pull", the implication being that Coriolanus will treat the porter as someone insignificant, of nuisance value only. Coriolanus is in various places

likened to a machine as he is here; he will "mow all down" like some great harvesting machine

(iii) This is a conversation between three of Aufidius' servants, after Coriolanus has come to Antium seeking Aufidius, and has entered his house while Aufidius is having a feast. They meet, Coriolanus reveals his identity, recounts his bad fortune and puts himself at Aufidius' mercy; Aufidius receives him warmly and swears that he will do his utmost to assist Coriolanus to have his revenge; then he takes Coriolanus in to meet his senators, and the meeting is recounted here.

Candidate H

1 (d) (ii). Act iv, Scene vii. Aufidius to a soldier. Aufidius, although consumed with jealousy at Coriolanus's popularity, keeps calm, and thus shows a contrast to his great enemy. Instead of dissolving into rage, as Coriolanus might have done, he calmly and coolly goes over the past events in his mind. He is already plotting revenge, but can afford to wait. "Casque...cushion." The casque was a helmet, thus synonymous with war. The cushion was used by members of the Senate, and is thus synonymous with politics. "To choke it in the utterance." Aufidius too, hopes to put an end to Coriolanus's popularity with his soldiers, before long. "Pride, which...ever taints." It is pride—of the undesirable kind—which is Coriolanus' tragic flaw, thus making his tragedy self-inflicted, for it is this which brings about his downfall. "Noble servant." This Coriolanus cannot remain: "I had rather be their servant in my way/Than sway with them in theirs." The irregularity of the scansion here shows this to be one of Shakespeare's later works, adding variety.

(iii) Aufidius has already planned to cause his enemy-partner's downfall—"When Caius—Rome is thine—Then art thou poor'st of all, for shortly art thou mine." The climax is soon to come.

Candidate I

1 (d) (ii). There are many points of interest in this passage, and it is dramatically invaluable for throwing light upon the character of Coriolanus about whom the words are spoken. Aufidius' judgements are true, cold and calculated and the passage may be compared with Hamlet's, "So oft it chances in particular men That for some vicious mole of nature." The passage is most interesting as an example of the dramatist's later style, for although the thought is clear enough it appears that it was not expressed fluently—the speech is involved, complex. "From the casque to the cushion", literally means from armour to soft cushions in the Capitol and it is a striking image—which is further continued in the "garb", meaning here "manner". "As he hath spices of..."—the use of food metaphors is common in Shakespeare, compare: "As if I loved my little Should be dieted in praises Sauced with lies."

"So our virtues lie in th'interpretation...", Aufidius, when later about to kill Marcius, says, "Sir, we must proceed as we do find the people."

(iii) These words are spoken by Aufidius to an officer just after Rome has learned that Marcius and Aufidius have joined forces to attack Rome and just before the scene returns to Rome when we learn of the unsuccessful attempt of Cominius to intercede.

Candidate A

1 (e) (ii). The subject matter is here of particular interest. It is surprising how much gratitude is expressed for this counsel of the Friar when all it really amounts to is a reversion to the supremely wise policy of doing nothing, the ultimate consequences of which he is largely unable to perceive. It also throws an interesting light upon contemporary religious institutions where officially celibate Friars profess a knowledge of the operations of love upon the mind; where a representative of a religious community not only connives at, but suggests the perpetration of, a deliberate untruth whose consequences might well be grave for the apparently bereaved lover; and where nunneries are regarded as suitable dumping grounds for morally weak and even fallen women (compare Hamlet to Ophelia "Go! get thee to a nunnery!"). His words even lack consistency—with one breath he is uttering words of assurance as to the ultimate outcome

of events and with the next he is outlining an escape route to cover the failure of the enterprise.

(iii) This speech occurs immediately after Hero's supposed death and actual faint following her ritual denunciation by Claudio in the church scene. The Friar's advice is carefully followed so that Claudio remains ignorant of the true situation until, after prompting by Leonato, he consents to and does marry Hero of whose identity he is not informed until the ceremony.

Candidate B

1 (e) (ii). These words are the necessary relief which comes after the innocent Hero has been accused of unchastity, in the church, on the day which should have been her wedding day. The whole scene is highly affective dramatically. It is practically a stage convention that a person has only to be accused in order to be found guilty. Everyone assumes that Hero is indeed guilty of the crime of which she was accused. Everyone that is except the Friar and Beatrice. The Friar it is who, presuming her innocence solely from the innocent-looking blushes on her face, suggests the best course of action for "righting" the wronged Hero. He suggests that they should rumour it that she has died, so that Claudio, her lover, will come to venerate her. This course of action is adopted and proves successful, as the Friar thought it would.

Candidate K

1 (e) (ii). This somewhat tortuous speech—although containing an admirable practical suggestion—is to me symptomatic of a rather unsatisfactory play in which too much trust is placed in the audience's suspension of disbelief, and in which most of the main characters appear in rather an unpleasant light. The 'simple' priest, instead of denying—or confirming—Hero's guilt, suggests a truly Macchiavellian stratagem to deceive Claudio. But even granted that this is what one would have expected from a disinterested clergyman, there is a perturbing change of tone in the last four lines: "Oh well, if this doesn't work, you can shut the girl up out of harm's way somewhere"—this is how Friar Francis' suggestion sounds to me. It is a surprisingly callous attitude, and with the worldly earlier, "if ever love had interest in his liver", is to me typical of the unreal lack of sensibility which the main characters suggest. However, on technical points the speech is more than competent, for the verse flows with a dramatic lucidity similar to Claudio's exposition of his situation in *Hamlet*.

Candidate H

1 (f) (ii). Bohemia—the King of Bohemia, who is Polixenes, the father of Florizel, the speaker. This firm and resolute speech, yet quite hazardous and based on passion rather than reason, likens Florizel to Leontes. Whereas Leontes sacrifices everything to a bad passion, Florizel is prepared to sacrifice everything to a good—if passion may be called so. Camillo tops this speech by saying, "This is most desperate, sir", and so it is. But that is what everybody said to Leontes. Florizel is blinded, not by jealousy but by love. "The pomp...gleaned"—Polixenes in his wrath told Florizel that he only placed his son above Perdita because of his royal blood—"but for our honour therein, unworthy thee". The mention of the sea on the shores of Bohemia has often caused much controversy. Some editors read Bythnia. But surely such details, compared to the human crisis, are unimportant. "My father's honoured friend"—we repeatedly hear Camillo addressed thus. He wins the confidence of all hearts.

(iii) Florizel, Act iv, Scene iv. Florizel who has in the guise of Doricles, a shepherd, been courting Perdita—lost daughter of Leontes, King of Sicilia, living as a shepherd's daughter—has been discovered by his father. Polixenes, full of wrath, orders him to return to the court. Florizel determines to flee with Perdita, and is here addressing Camillo, his father's courtier, once of Leontes' court.

Candidate N

1 (f) (ii). The main point of interest in this is that it provides yet another example of the rapidity of Shakespeare's Romance technique. Florizel's plan is laid, altered and executed in a few brief speeches. Now we can begin to trace the course of retribution and forgiveness. The idyllic happiness of the shepherds has been broken up but for a moment only. There is an interesting repetition of theme—Florizel's flight from Bohemia to Sicilia and his father's flight from Sicilia to Bohemia, both aided by the resourceful and noble Camillo. This is only the only sign of manliness and intelligence in Florizel—he is an insignificant and otherwise somewhat insipid character. His immediate determination to fulfill the vows made earlier to Perdita redeems him for us. Bohemia has no sea-coast but Shakespeare was not the only Elizabethan to hold this misguided view. Despite this the presence of the sea adds interest and the lovely imagery of "a vessel rides fast by"... Again, we can see Shakespeare's love of the mystery of the sea. "Let myself and Fortune" is another of the constant references to Fortune and chance in the Romances—chance brought Perdita to Bohemia and by a chance she leaves again for her birthplace.

Candidate O

1 (f) (ii). The second to the fourth lines have words similar to some in the Old Testament where reference is made to all things "on the earth, and in the waters under the earth". This is suitable in a play where everything is symbolical, and many of the symbols and references are to Christian things. "Pomp" is still used to-day in the phrase "pomp and circumstance", meaning the ceremonies attached to the court. "Tug" is used in an interesting way, it is a rather colloquial and expressive word, and coming at the beginning of a line it has a peculiar force. This speech is lacking in images, but it still remains energetic and forceful. It brings out clearly Florizel's great love for Perdita.

Candidate P

1 (f) (ii). This passage is significant in so much that it shows Florizel's very great love for Perdita, for he is willing to give up his whole courtly life and future kingship in order to wed one whom he believes at the time to be a shepherdess. However, of far greater significance is the fact that Florizel is refusing to face up to life—unlike Perdita who says, "Now I am awake, I'll queen it no further". Florizel is indulging in escapism, as do many of the characters in *The Winter's Tale*. This "putting to sea" is typical of many of us, for we all at some time or another attempt to, or do indeed "put to sea". Shakespeare is moralising in this speech and in Camillo's one of advice that follows, on escapism from reality. The poetry here is Shakespeare's at his best and maturest: the lines run on into each other with enjambement, the caesuras are constantly changed. The slight contortions of the rhythms as in, "Therefore I pray you" and onwards, reflect the turmoil of indecision and distress which is in Florizel's mind. The words "honour" and "passion" are mentioned in this extract, and they play an important part in the play; for honour and grace—as seen in Hermione, are in conflict with passion and jealousy, seen in Leontes.

Candidate L

1 (g). In *Richard III* the women are as a wailing chorus, bemoaning the mess the men have made of the country. There is too much of it in the play for it to be generally dramatically effective—it is the work of the young dramatist. Richard referred to as the "tiger" is quite complimentary—elsewhere he is a "bottled spider" or a "bunch-back'd toad". The lines describing how "the conquerors make war upon themselves" are instrumental to the whole series of Shakespeare's history plays. England's trouble begins with the murder of Richard II, which is a crime against "divine right" and "passive obedience". Brother set against brother is part of the curse which England has to suffer as a result. Richard III, the scourge, the "hell-hound", finally purges the country of the crime by his death at the hands of Richmond.

(iii) Edward IV has died; Richard of Gloucester is Lord Protector. Edward's widow, Queen Elizabeth, and his mother, the Duchess of York are with the younger Prince, the

young Duke of York, awaiting the arrival of Prince Edward preparatory to his coronation when Dorset rushes in with the news that Gloucester and Buckingham have imprisoned Rivers and Grey, the Queen's relations, together with Vaughan in Pomfret Castle, where they await execution for "treason". The two women, when they hear this news, go into sanctuary with the young Prince.

3. Section B

The policy of setting questions slightly more straightforward than those of immediately previous years yielded a more routine set of answers at the top without much affecting the middle and the bottom. The emphasis on character and structure left too little opportunity for those who wanted to write about the poetry, and some displayed qualities in the first section which found slight scope in the second. Few have the gift for approaching even character and structure through language, and those few exercise it best in Section A.

All but one of the samples are from above-average scripts but not all are from the best; some exemplify corrigible faults and limitations and from them it is possible to guess what a commonplace "pass" answer looks like. The lowest grades are still blighted by irrelevance, inaccuracy, prolixity, thinness and aridity. But the middle are almost as persistently haunted by the ghosts of rehearsed answers—most often to questions of the previous year. The work of a few good, as well as many bad, candidates is marred by the display of long quotations which serve no useful purpose. Phrases and odd lines aptly and frequently used are far more effective, unless the longer passage is needed for the argument or as a theme for practical criticism. The good candidate's mastery of his subject is usually immediately clear from his style. It is not simply the point that matters, but the point made with proper emphasis and conviction, or made with becoming lightness if it happens to be dubious or marginal. Not every point needs to be illustrated by quotation or allusion but the more difficult and subtle should be.

2. *The opening scene of "Hamlet" has been much admired for its swift creation of atmosphere. Choose any other scene in "Hamlet" that you think in some way remarkable, and point out its special qualities and effects.*

Those who chose this question usually showed a good knowledge of the play supported by an interest in theatre-technique. A's answer is observant, appreciative and at two or three points cogently phrased; but the brevity is not entirely vindicated—the promise of the third paragraph is largely unfulfilled. Q has admirably focused his enthusiasm for the play on to its theatrical detail; his readiness to admire the language is commendable but his hyperboles (here and elsewhere) tend to become generic; Granville Barker's method has been thoroughly assimilated.

3. *"Claudius is too regal, too good a king, to fill the role of villain naturally and satisfactorily." Discuss.*

This was the most popular question. It was possible to give some sort of answer from a hazy recollection of either the play or the film, and the

abilities of the average candidate often went untested as he lapsed into uninformed sentiment about Claudius's love for Gertrude ("we see him gazing into her eyes") or about his patience with Hamlet ("He is very kind to Hamlet and Hamlet pays him back by trying to kill him.") Indeed, the moral instability of about a third of the answers was disturbing. R is appropriately balanced in her judgement, sensitive in her appeals to evidence and constantly alert to the bearing of her findings on her views of the play as a whole. Her own phrases are neat if unremarkable, and she supplements them adroitly by quotations from the play and its critics. The paragraphing imposes a tight order on the argument and large and small points are held in the right perspective. G makes many of the same points and a few of her own, but fails to engage closely with the detail; nevertheless, she has thought about the detail and most of her insights are manifestly capable of interesting development.

4. *Describe the relationship between Coriolanus and his mother throughout the course of the play.*

This play is more popular than it used to be and questions were better answered, on average, than the *Hamlet* ones. This question invited and usually received a selective narrative answer, and S was one of the few who described the "relationship" between the characters and not simply their conduct through the play. He shows fine insight in making the relationship the centre of the tragic irony. Quotations (slightly inaccurate) are tellingly used.

5. *Which does "Coriolanus" reflect more clearly—Ancient Rome or Elizabethan England?*

This question was attempted by the few who were ready to display their knowledge of Roman or English history. M's opening quotation shows that there is an opportunity for the dramatic critic too—the monumental quality of the structure and the austere rigour of the language might aptly be called "Roman". M only entertains the point momentarily, however, and makes classical history the centre of her answer. She does the job well but her attention to the Roman political scene is disproportionate and the vital points about "virtus" and the verse are made tardily and left undeveloped. Very few observed that the "body politic" was a Roman notion of urgent interest to the Elizabethans.

6. *What do you understand by "comic relief"? Do you think the phrase adequately describes the effect of the Dogberry scenes in "Much Ado About Nothing"?*

Candidates, like critics, are apt to treat Shakespeare's comedies as if they were novelettes—sentimental, amusing, inconsequential and incredible. Few recognise that the conventions of romantic comedy can be used critically, to make discoveries about human nature and about the manners and morals of men.

Perhaps three or four managed to define "comic relief" adequately, but most were bewildered and quite failed to distinguish the senses "what a relief" and "throwing into relief". C supplied a thoughtful

answer, and showed a feeling for the play as a "made thing". His style is explanatory, not cogent, and there are few unusual insights; but the topic is covered with a clear argument. Very few noticed that the pretensions of the Dogberry language connect with the playwright's interest in Italianate sophistication on the one hand and honest English plainness on the other.

7. *Which pair of lovers in "Much Ado About Nothing" seems to you to be bound by the deeper affection? Suggest how your impression is affected by Shakespeare's general use of prose for the one pair and verse for the other.*

Most answers offered more or less routine impressions of the two pairs of lovers and only touched the prose and verse in a last paragraph—a fault for which the examiners must take some responsibility. T's limited abilities are betrayed in her prose, in some repetitive touches and in her handling of quotations from Palmer (failing to discriminate his insights from his commonplace). But she covers the topic, keeps her observations relevant and illustrates them fully.

8. *'Sicilia and Bohemia are sharply distinguished in the course of "The Winter's Tale". How does Shakespeare present these kingdoms and their kings?*

A majority of candidates taking this play submitted derivative answers, seeming better acquainted with the critics than with the text. Readers unfamiliar with the play would have thought it an etiolated prose allegory. C again brings good sense to bear and shows himself alive to technique. The performance might have been stronger had it included a few sentences touching some finer detail—the encounter of the two courtiers in the opening scene, for instance, or Shakespeare's use of soliloquy and aside to present Leontes's reactions in the first act. As it is, C makes the main points convincingly and conveys his response to that drama of character which is one aspect of the play.

9. *Shakespeare's Last Plays used by some to be thought the work of a tired dramatist bored with his art. What evidence do you find in "The Winter's Tale" for or against this view?*

This question could be answered in almost any terms. Few chose to appeal to the poetry, rather more appealed to the allegoric structure, but most supplied rehearsed answers on the play's alleged faults. U's prose mixes felicity and clumsiness, but her feeling for the language registers in spite of some lack of understanding (about Leontes's jealousy and disease) and for all its selective brevity her answer has some shape.

10. *'Much of the evil in the play "Richard III" does not stem from Richard personally; it is inherited from the past.' Discuss.*

Almost all the answers were inferior versions of the one sampled; few showed R's grasp of detail or shared her precise knowledge of other plays in the sequence. Perhaps this could be expected, but many answers would have been better for some attention to Margaret and for some of R's sense

of the play's structure. Most attended to one episode and character at a time—some more thoroughly than R—and almost all tried either to absolve Richard or to make him wholly culpable.

11. *Do you find in "Richard III" suggestions of pity and humanity which act as a foil to the cruelty and harshness?*

The poorer candidates misunderstood the question and confined their answers to Richard himself. V exemplifies the better kind of balanced answer and in spite of some omissions (e.g. the murderers of Clarence) it covers the topic sufficiently. Many showed the moral instability noticed in the Claudius answers, and in this W is representative. Many features of the "pass" answer can be observed here—the one quotation, the inaccuracy, the toughness and the sentimentality. On the other hand, she writes with energy, and might well claim that her response is "personal"; but would she be prepared to defend it on reflection?

APPENDIX III (Section B)

Candidate A

2. A scene which I consider to be exceptionally powerful is that in the graveyard. In itself it scarcely advances the essential narrative save only that Hamlet learns of Ophelia's death. The special quality of the scene is its emphatic heightening of tension which has been fluctuating ever since the grim foreboding of, "What, hath this thing appeared again tonight?"

Especially after the ghastly parody of the fight in the grave it becomes apparent that the conclusion of the play must follow logically, quickly and inevitably.

In order to estimate the effect of the scene it must be considered how the play would suffer by its omission. As a mere recital of events it would be virtually unimpaired, but the audience would be flung into the final catastrophe without sufficient preparation and without the atmosphere of continual change and decay generated by the twin emotional centres—Yorick's skull and Ophelia's body.

The particular qualities of the scene are the ways in which the atmosphere is made to throw fresh light upon familiar characters. Laertes with his sullen repetitive "What ceremony else?" and "Must there no more be done?" is revealed as coldly determined on revenge and resolved that Ophelia shall receive no slights from anyone. This is demonstrated in his harsh and even callous prophecy:

I tell thee, churlish priest
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be
When thou liest howling

and in his reluctance to temper his anger with thoughts of royal expediency and of "our last night's speech".

The Queen is confirmed as a sympathetic character in our eyes with her short but beautiful farewell to Ophelia:

Sweets to the sweet farewell
I thought to have deck'd thy bridal bed
And not to have strew'd thy grave.

Hamlet is demonstrated to have reached and surpassed the limits of mental strain and there can be no doubt that he is temporarily unbalanced when he leaps down into the grave uttering his declaration that he is Hamlet, the Royal Dane.

In conclusion it may be said that the special quality of the scene is its evocation of a malignant and anticipatory atmosphere; its special effects are the stressing of "tragic flaws" and actual combat so terribly demonstrating the shape of coming events casting their shadows before.

Candidate Q

2. If the first scene in *Hamlet* is a magnificent overture, though indeed it has weaknesses, notably the lengthy discussion about Fortinbras, the last is as superb a finale as the wonderful conclusion of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Up to the moment when this last scene begins (and here it must be observed that the division in the text of acts and scenes is arbitrary and open to much disagreement) the play from a superb start has slowed down. "The native hue of resolution", has indeed been "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought". There have been moments of action but we feel increasingly that something is needed to set the play moving again. Briefly, *Hamlet*, which has been aptly compared to Langland's "Fair field full of folk" is rather too vast a canvass for "the three-hours traffic of the stage". Yet how superbly, when faced with the conclusion, does Shakespeare enact it. From this scene each may take, as he leaves the theatre, his own thoughts with him. For the "groundlings" there has been action and rough justice, for those with feeling the terrible pity of it all, and above all, for those who have the ability to appreciate it, the magnificent poetry which here rises to a splendid peak of noble diction.

To take the scene from the start. Hamlet receives the challenge. We are perhaps surprised at his change of mood. He has come through his long struggle and sees clear at last his goal. When Horatio would have him cautious he smilingly sets his warning aside: "Not a whit. We defy augury. There's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow." Then the King and Queen enter and all the main characters are present. The scene is, or should be, simple; the great hall, the throne on the dais, the two combatants facing each other across the length of the hall. There is a fine suggestion of such a setting in the Kranach Press *Hamlet*. Then, after the proclamation Hamlet approaches Laertes and makes his noble apology. This we feel is right and just. Moreover, dramatically, it immediately places Laertes in the wrong. He becomes the lesser man, as he reveals in his remark later: "Though it goes almost against my conscience."

Hamlet and Laertes take the foils. Again the choice of setting is superb. As they go through the opening ritual of the duel with all its cold formal beauty the tension mounts. At the Globe perhaps the torches were alight for this closing scene. Then the duel begins with its swift flicker of movement and shadow, and all the court intent upon it. The interchange of dialogue is equally skilled, breathless and broken to match the action: "A hit"—"No"—"A hit, a palpable hit"—"A touch, I do confess".

Then comes the first of several crises in the scene. This is the Queen's death. So eagerly is the King watching that he fails to notice her take the cup. It is the height of tragic irony that the Queen, who the king has sold his soul for, should die by Claudius's own hand, toasting her son.

Claudius ages in a moment. His reply to Laertes, "I do not think it", with its hopelessness brevity, reveals this.

Then follows the scuffle and the change of foils. This, it has been said, is ill-contrived and clumsy. I do not share this view. If Laertes had, as was also suggested, died by some manipulation of the cup, it would have needed far more contrivance. I have never been distracted by this in a stage performance. Now Laertes reveals himself to be not "the fairly accomplished young prig" Q has dubbed him but worthy of Hamlet's earlier description of him as "a most gallant gentleman". His speech turns all eyes on the King. If there is a fairly large retinue and several guards this scene is made enormously effective as this body of silent witness turn to look at Claudius. Hamlet kills the King who falls clutching feebly at the throne which he won so evilly. Now the superb diction has us in its grip.

Hamlet exchanges forgiveness with Laertes and the poignance of these young men's reconciliation is very moving. There comes the lovely and indeed perfect verse which precedes Hamlet's death. Such lines as these: "Oh I die Horatio/The potent poison quite o'er crows my spirit", "As this fell sergeant death/Is strict in his arrest", and finest of all

Absent thee from felicity awhile
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To tell my story.

with the inimitable, "The rest is silence", reveal Shakespeare's genius for word which justifies Ben Jonson's, "He was not of an age but for all time."

After Horatio's, "Good night sweet prince/And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest", we feel the play is over. But the end is dignified, necessary and Fortinbras' epitaph:

For he was likely, had he been put on
To have proved most nobly

is a fine conclusion.

We see in Hamlet's snatching of the cup from Horatio also a final glimpse of his strength and courage. We see in the manner of their deaths the character of the King and the Queen. We are overwhelmed and left with the true feeling of "purgation". The "willing suspension of disbelief" has been here compassed by Shakespeare with consummate art. We do not notice the heap of bodies on the stage. Our thoughts follow the captains as they bear Hamlet to the stage.

Candidate R

3. Claudius must not be looked upon simply as a villain. He has many fine qualities and is undoubtedly regal and a good king. Nor did Shakespeare mean him to be simply a villain. He has a far subtler role to play as Hamlet's "mighty opposite". Some of the aspects of character we should associate with the villain have been given to other characters in the play. For the play must be viewed as a whole with Claudius playing the part of an adversary and of a foil to Hamlet.

We must realise first that Claudius is an evil man. No attempt to whitewash him can succeed. He committed adultery with his brother's wife; murdered his brother by pouring poison from a vial in his ear while he slept in his orchard; and committed what was in Elizabethan days regarded as incest by marrying his brother's wife. There is something mean about this King who after plotting the "removal" of his nephew attempts to cheat heaven in his prayers. He knows that he has sinned and that he will be punished by God, but in the meantime he intends to enjoy the fruits of his misdeeds: "My crown, my own ambition and my queen."

Claudius must be viewed against the background of his own age. The Elizabethans were used to seeing on their stage the perfect hypocrite, the White Devil. In the *Merchant of Venice* Antonio declares:

An evil soul producing holy witness
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek
A goodly apple rotten at the heart.

They knew well that all that "glisters is not gold". Claudius is a Machiavellian. For him the only criterion is expediency. He is a very Italianate villain: his last resort is always to poison—poison in a vial, on an unbated sword point, in a cup. He does not lack courage, but he prefers to have unpleasant tasks dispatched by someone else, whether it is the King of England or Laertes.

Claudius is by no means wholly evil. He has great regality. His speech is full of dignified phrases; he has a mastery of rhetoric; he has presence in the face of difficulties. Moreover, he is the great opportunist: he removes those in his path; wins the Council's support; and turns to advantage the accidental death of Polonius and Laertes's desire for revenge. His love for his Queen is undoubted. Hamlet's hideous description of their love is only the pouring out of his polluted soul. Claudius fears to hurt her, and tries in vain to prevent her death. There is genuine sorrow in his speech to Laertes in which he describes the waning of her love. He truly means what he says when he declares that he would not kill Hamlet as she would be upset, and she is so close to his heart that he could not bear to hurt her in any way.

Claudius is a "mighty opposite" in that he acts both as a foil to Hamlet and as a great adversary. The heart of the play is the delay theme. Hamlet's procrastination is seen in high relief against the diabolical efficiency of Claudius. While Hamlet is wringing the soul of his mother, Claudius is scheming his downfall. The greatest moment of irony comes when Hamlet, always the idealist and plotting the perfect revenge, refrains from killing the King as he wishes to send his soul to hell and the king appears to be

praying. In fact Hamlet has misused his great opportunity; for the King is really only examining his own conscience, and knows that while his thoughts remain below his prayers will never reach heaven.

The battle between Claudius and Hamlet is also a battle of wits. Hamlet has the advantage of the man who is firmly established in power and accepted as ruler by the people. Claudius's wit is used in parrying Hamlet's attacks, as is seen after the play scene when Hamlet assumes his "antic disposition" and mocks the King. Hamlet himself delights in freaks and tricks of thought. His opening words are a quibble: "A little more than kin and less than kind." His farewell to the King is a bitter pun on his "union". Hamlet by feigning madness leads the King on. "The subtlety of his intellect directed him to that tone of wayward sarcasm in which while he appeared to others to be merely wandering, he might relieve his soul by the utterance of wild and whirling words." In the play scene he devises a Multiple Mouse Trap to catch the King. He throws out bait to Polonius, to the Queen and to the King, in turn. He even suggests in "Lucianus nephew to the King" that he is plotting to kill the King, and so hoodwinks the court. Eventually Claudius sees what he is aiming at, and in terror calls for lights and rushes from the room. Here Hamlet's bitterness and the utter fear of Claudius cause us for a moment to shift our sympathies and see in the naked terror of the murderer an object of pity.

However, to proclaim that Claudius is a thoroughly good king is to destroy the theme of the play. Hamlet has to obey the Ghost's command, and to say that the Ghost laid on him not a duty but a burden is to make nonsense of the plot. Hamlet is supposed to have our sympathy; and however much his callousness may shock us we are supposed to see the play through his eyes and see in his inmost soul a reflection of ourselves.

Claudius does not fit the role of a villain in one respect. He is not the man of violence or rash anger. In the past he has shown ruthlessness, but on the stage his actions are always carefully moderated; never does he lose his head in a crisis; even when Hamlet's return is imminent he thinks of a plan to remove the unwanted visitor. In Laertes we see the man of violent action and hasty passions. Revenge consumes him after the deaths of Polonius and Ophelia. He bursts into the palace with the cry: "O! thou vile thing, give me my father". As Hamlet repeats the word mother, so Laertes does "father". In his anger all Christian simples are swept aside and he feels capable of cutting Hamlet's throat in a Church. The struggle with Hamlet in the graveyard, and his affected quibble concerning his honour show that he is not a man easily to be turned aside from revenge. I do not suggest that Laertes is the true villain of the play, his magnanimity in death is alone sufficient to redeem him, but that he provides one of the aspects of the villain.

Thus Claudius is seen as a man who is an able ruler, efficient in matters of domestic upheaval, and threatened foreign invasion. He is a great opportunist, a man who is capable of creative action, and who dearly loves his queen. Yet he is an adulterer, a murderer, and a practised spy, utterly ruthless, sensual and corrupt. His role in the play is that of the "mighty adversary" the great adversary and foil to Hamlet. In the final battle evil fearing to be discovered destroys itself and Hamlet by his death delivers Denmark from its evil ruler and leaves it not an "unweeded garden" but a land of peace. Yet even in evil as exemplified by Claudius Shakespeare sees good:

There is some soul of goodness in things evil
Would we observingly distil it out.

Candidate G

3. Lesser play-writers would have filled the place of villain in *Hamlet* with a rather flat villain with all the marks of his type. He would have been a slightly less pantomime version of Lucianus in the play within the play. But Claudius is a full, round character and no mere type-cast villain filling up the part. He is no "mighty opposite" to Hamlet in the sense that they are both equal figures locked in a struggle for supremacy. Hamlet stands alone and no other characters approach him in stature, including Claudius.

It is part of the irony of the play that Claudius the murderer should be such a good

king. It is perhaps part of the irony of life that the good and effective ruler is usually not the idealist but the worldly-wise man who is not too scrupulous.

Claudius is essentially selfish, his first thought on hearing of Polonius' murder is, "It had been so with us had we been there." But he is a ruler able to deal swiftly and effectively with trouble, and has a certain regality. He deals promptly with the emergency from Norway and disposes of it effectively, without resorting to arms. He is skillful in keeping his advisors and councillors in a good temper and in persuading them they have more authority than they have: "Nor have we herein barr'd/Your better wisdoms. . .", he says to the councillors when he has married Gertrude. He is personally brave in facing the rebellion of Laertes and his love for his queen seems genuine. We may not feel about him too much of "the divinity that doth hedge a king" but he is a good ruler.

Yet Shakespeare does not allow us to forget the less pleasant side of his character. A part which could be emphasized more when the play is acted than when it is read. For Claudius's words have often too much subtlety and smoothness in them. In his first speech there is a contrast between his carefully studied words about his marriage and his efficient tones on the real business of the day. His (use) of tools, first Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, then Polonius, does not help the impression of his character. His sensuality and love of the good things in life, although pointed out in lurid, disgusted tones by Hamlet, can be seen to some extent by the audience themselves. His hard-drinking is highlighted by Hamlet's own distaste for it.

Claudius has his good points as have all human beings. He is not vindictive, not planning it seems to have Hamlet killed until after the play scene and death of Polonius, and the former could be interpreted as a direct threat to himself from his nephew. He also has a great advantage which Hamlet lacks—the ability to look at himself directly and know his faults, instead of self-deception. He cannot gain or deserve forgiveness and he realises it.

Yet the audience does never forget that Claudius is a mean, selfish murderer, who killed his brother for gain. The statecraft of the time might allow eavesdropping and other unsavoury points, but they still leave a nasty taste in the mouth. His shrewdness and ability to play on peoples' characteristics and feelings may rouse admiration for his skill as we see Laertes gradually moulded to fit his plan but it cannot make one like Claudius. He pays for the crime in that after he knows that he must always live and die alone: no one can share it. He kills by accident the woman for whom he was forced to scheme and plan as he tries once more to stop her from knowing her evil deeds. But nothing can excuse his crime.

In Claudius his good points high-light his evil side. If he was completely as Hamlet saw him, nothing but a "villain, villain, smiling damned villain" he would not be human. It is because he is human that his villainy is more real and terrible. He thought he could trick this world and the next and he nearly succeeded; it took a spirit from the other world to prove him wrong. His ability to murder and conceal it also helped him, sad to say, to rule Denmark effectively. He is never less than villain, but he is a real and credible one, he has nothing in common with the world of pantomime.

Candidate S

4. Coriolanus is Volumnia's creation. It was she who sent him to the wars at an early age, she who set him on in ruthless course of honour for honour's sake. She would rather have eleven son's die for their country than one who squandered his inheritance in riotous living, and he accepts her values. Coriolanus is the proof of Volumnia's ambitions, which she, since she is a woman, cannot fulfill.

The play is about an iron mother and an iron son. Volumnia fails to treat her son as a human being. It is she who robs him of his personality. Wilson Knight likens him to a flashy motor bicycle—"his battery is his hum". A humaneness he has; it tries to reach the surface when, after his refusal of any honour save the title of Coriolanus, he begs for kindness to be shown to a Volscian whose name he has forgotten. And it is true that a lesser man would have exacted a bloody toll from Rome: Coriolanus saves Rome and redeems himself by dying because he possesses the resources for love to draw on. But

not until he has realised his mother's influence on him all his life, is it possible for him to make this decision. Coriolanus can be described as "the splendid oaf who has never come to maturity" because his mother has not taught him to love nor to sacrifice his own ego when occasion demands.

We first see Coriolanus with his mother after his triumphant homecoming from the Volscian wars. Volumnia's triumph is supreme:

I have lived to see inherited
My very wishes, the building of my fancy—
Only there's one thing missing which I doubt not
But our Rome will cast upon thee.

When she counts up his "cicatrices to show to the people" she is as Wilson Knight says, like a miser counting his coins, or a bookie speculative on the chances of his horse. The consulship is the zenith of her ambitions for her son; in war he has received the supreme honours.

By sending him out to the people in the garb of humiliation, Volumnia sends Coriolanus to his death. Now they no longer understand each other. For Coriolanus, honour is integrity—"I would not surcease to my own truth"; for Volumnia integrity cannot be sacrificed to honour—she says that when the occasion demands it—"I would dissemble with my nature. . .". This Coriolanus cannot do. "I wonder that my mother did not approve me further. . . would you have me dissemble with my nature, Rather say I play the man I am." Coriolanus cannot face the people "mildly"; the taunt of traitor enrages him, as "boy" is to do later, and he is exiled.

When Coriolanus leaves Rome with the majesty of a "lonely dragon" the estranged relationship is evident. Volumnia cannot understand her son's calm:

Come, mother, where is thy ancient courage
You were used to say extremity is
The trier of spirits . . .
Bid me fare well and smile.

After her meeting with the tribunes, her remark "Anger's my meat, I sup upon myself", leads us to Menenius's attempt to win back Coriolanus after he has eaten. It is this situation, Coriolanus threatening to storm the gates of Rome, that Volumnia is required to mend. That is the irony of the play. One who prided herself in a warrior son, "a thing of blood"; who loved her son recognising he was an instrument of death—"Death in his nery arm doth lie, which Being advanced, declines, and then men die" is faced by a son who threatens her own life.

She tries to win him by trusting him. As before she sent him to the multitudes by saying: "Thy valiantness was mine, thou sucked'st from me/But owe thy pride thyself"; now she says, "Thinkest thou it honourable. . . Still to remember wrongs?", and "this fellow had a Volscian to his mother". She kneels to him, and Coriolanus is horrified—"What your knees to me, to your corrected son?" He acknowledges the call of family and state. No longer can he stand "as if a man were author of himself and knew no other kin".

Volumnia and his own better nature conquer Coriolanus.

Ladies, you deserve to have a temple built you.
All the swords in Italy and her confederate arms
Could not have made this peace.

Volumnia sees it only as a military peace, for Coriolanus it is inward peace. In his anguished cry "O Mother, mother, mother. . ." he has realised his relationship with her, and his knowledge redeems him.

Candidate M

5. "Shakespeare subordinates his tremendous gifts" to make *Coriolanus* a Roman play, as Palmer writes. Not only does he draw much material concerning Rome at that time from Plutarch, but he gives the whole play the impression of a "monument" rather than a picture, the true atmosphere of Rome. The only two great characters, Volumnia and Coriolanus, are essentially Roman, the first in her patriotism, the second in his pride. Thus, though Elizabethan allusions creep in *Coriolanus* generally reflects Ancient Rome.

From Plutarch, Shakespeare draws his description of the Romans at war. Coriolanus is seen leading his men in an attack on the besieged city of Corioli. The traditions are carefully maintained. Thus there is first of all a parley with the citizens and then this having ended in defiance, the besieged soldiers issue forth in an attack. The Romans are driven to their "trenches". However, they retaliate urged on by Coriolanus, "You shames of Rome! You souls of geese in the shape of men! You herd of... Boils and Plagues plaster you o'er." Finally, the Romans win and Titus Lartius is left to manage affairs. It was traditional then for there to be a person in charge of ransoming the prisoners of any rank, which was one of the means by which the wars were financed. Also the men were allowed to plunder, and Coriolanus is shown reviling them for their really necessary occupation. Coriolanus' triumphal return is typical of Roman times. He received, for the third time, the oaken garland, which was given for saving a man's life or for exceptional valour, and which exempted the possessor from taxation. Besides, Coriolanus enters Rome in a triumphal procession, such as was the custom in Roman times, and a herald goes before him to recount his deeds.

During the events in Rome itself, Shakespeare manages to introduce a considerable amount of detail of Roman times. Coriolanus was sponsored by his generals for the office of consul. There were at this time two in this office and to obtain it, the candidate had to receive the nomination of the senate, which then consisted of about six hundred nobles, and the "stinking breaths" or votes of the people. It was the custom, which Coriolanus considered might be withdrawn, for the candidate to stand in his white toga alone, "the napless vesture of humility" or "toga candidus" and request the people for their vote. Shakespeare follows this closely, even to the showing of wounds gained in the country's service, which rite Coriolanus refuses to perform. The tribunes, Brutus and Sicinius, who play such an important role in making Coriolanus show "his true colours" (Palmer) were actually two of five granted to the people after the secession of the Plebs in 490 B.C. They were elected by the people and acted as their ambassadors to the nobles. Cominius also mentions our "sometime dictator". These were elected for a period of six months, in a moment of emergency and had supreme powers. They were accompanied by twenty-four lictors, the consuls by twelve and the praetors by six. "Lictors" are introduced into "Coriolanus" as are aediles, who draw up lists of people's votes, and carry out Sicinius' instructions about stirring up the people and keeping them quiet when he wishes to speak. The tribes referred to in these lists were the thirty into which the plebs were divided and the three of the patricians. "Augurers" too were a traditional feature of Rome. Menenius tells how they predict great things for Coriolanus just as in *Julius Caesar* they foretell disaster.

The characters of the people concerned in the play are the chief means by which Shakespeare gives the impression of ancient Rome. No Elizabethan English mother would feel pride in her son being "first on the field", or rejoice in his wounds as Volunnia does. She is intensely aristocratic, proud of her son, and patriotic. She is typical of the greatest Roman matrons. She is unapproachable, noble but not humane and loveable. As Verity says, "Volunnia is Rome". Her son, too, the only other really great figure in the play, typifies true Roman pride. The Roman civilization was not tremendously cultured until the Greeks had effect on it. It exalted the importance of "virtus", physical and mental courage. Coriolanus has enough bravery to "choke" all his other faults "in the utterance", but as a typical Roman patrician he is "too absolute", "His nature is too noble for this world." He despises the "scurvy wretches" the plebs who "tickle the poor edge" of their "opinion" and make themselves "scabs".

The Elizabethan references are fairly frequent. "Divines" and the "holy church-yard" are introduced with "augurers" and "seld-shown flamens". The "city mills" of London are mentioned and the mob has its "stiff bats and clubs" as the London apprentices did. The "plebs" have been called the English mob but are they not typical of any country. Fickleness is a characteristic of mobs everywhere not specifically English ones. However, Coriolanus' welcome as he returns from Corioli could be in London. The people sitting astride the roofs, the maid with her "reechy neck", the ladies with their dainty handkerchiefs and "war of white and red" in their cheeks. This is the only time that Rome really seems in Elizabethan England.

Coriolanus has not been popular in England but has been in France. This Palmer suggests is because the French like "monuments", like Corneille's work and they like the noble verse, often becoming like prose, with its implication of emotion rather than eloquent expression. *Coriolanus* is too Roman for the English. We prefer Denmark or Illyria or even *Julius Caesar's* "Elizabethan Rome".

Candidate C

6. "Comic Relief", a device frequently used by Shakespeare, consists of the introduction of an amusing scene, often only distantly related to the main theme of the play, after an intensely moving scene which has gripped the emotions of the audience; if these emotions are constantly played upon by the author, they become numb and the climax, which should be the most moving part of the play, has less effect; scenes of comic relief prevent this numbness by allowing the audience to relax.

However, Shakespeare hardly ever introduces a scene that is purely comic relief; thus the scene between Hamlet and the Gravediggers, which is to some extent comic relief before the climax of the play, emphasises the somewhat macabre atmosphere of much of the play and particularly of the climax and shows the changes in Hamlet's mood and, to some extent his character, which have taken place since his last appearance and have only been suggested by the letter to Horatio. Similarly, the Dogberry scenes of *Much Ado*, while they are to some extent comic relief, also serve a very important purpose in the development of the plot.

Comic relief would at first sight hardly seem necessary in a comedy, but Shakespeare introduces into *Much Ado* the narrowly-averted tragedy of Don John's plotting against "that young start-up" who "hath all the glory of my overthrow", and Claudio's denunciation of Hero in the chapel: "Give not this rotten orange to your friend". The emotions of the audience are played upon in the scene where Claudio decides that, if Don John proves his accusations against Hero, "In the congregation, where I should wed, I'll denounce her," and in the scene where he carries his threat into effect.

After the first of these scenes, therefore, and both before and after the second, we are shown Dogberry, committing malapropisms right and left; "Twere pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul"; the watch, with their peculiar sense of duty: "We will rather sleep than talk; we know what belongs to a watch"; Verges, declaring to Leonato that the watch has captured the two greatest knaves, "excepting your grace", in all Messina; and finally, most impressive and convincing of all, the great outburst of Dogberry's wounded pride: "O that I had been writ down an ass!"

These scenes are low comedy, practically farce, for even the most illiterate and self-important village constable would hardly commit all the mistakes of Dogberry; he would surely know what "malefactors" were, but when asked, "Who are the malefactors?" Dogberry replies "Marry, that am I and my partner." Apart from any other purpose they have, therefore, these scenes are designed as comic relief and to satisfy the "groundlings" who are "incapable of anything but inexplicable dumbshows and noise".

However, they also have another very important purpose; they are an essential part of the plot of the play. The gullibility of Don Pedro and Claudio, who can be completely taken in by the plotting of such an obvious villain as Don John, is still further emphasized when this plot is discovered by Dogberry and the watch; as Borachio points out, no doubt with a slight sarcastic emphasis; "What your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to life." The plot could not be discovered by Don Pedro and Claudio, for this would destroy the effectiveness of the Chapel scene which finally brings Beatrice and Benedick to reveal their loves; "Kill Claudio!" would be much less effective if Claudio had discovered, or was shortly to discover by his own efforts, the mistake that he had made.

Therefore the plot has to be discovered by some outside character; the constable and the watch are obvious candidates, but they cannot be a business-like and efficient body, or the plot would be revealed to Leonato before the wedding. As it is, Dogberry and Verges manage to reveal that they have "comprehended two auspicious persons", and only Leonato's haste prevents them coming to the point.

In *Much Ado*, therefore, Shakespeare needed a character of somewhat limited intelli-

gence and efficiency who could discover the plots of Don John but not reveal them until their most important results—the concealment of Hero and the mutual understanding of Beatrice and Benedick—had already taken place. To carry out this function, he created the Watch and Dogberry, and both in order to emphasise their inefficiency and to provide some “comic relief” and amusement for the “groundlings”, he developed their characters to considerable proportions. The Dogberry scenes are this “comic relief”, but this phrase is hardly an adequate description of them.

Candidate T

7. It is obvious from the start of the play that Beatrice and Benedick are bound by a far deeper affection than Claudio and Hero. As Smith writes, “it is no great passion that Don John seeks to ruin. Hero and Claudio should hardly be called lovers.” This impression is greatly affected by Shakespeare’s use of prose for Beatrice and Benedick and verse for Claudio and Hero.

As John Palmer writes, Beatrice and Benedick are interested in each other from the start—“interested to the point of obsession” and their witty, pert dialogue strengthens this impression. Beatrice begins by inquiring after “Signor Mountanto” and Benedick is no sooner on the stage than he is professing his admiration for Beatrice: “There’s her cousin, and she were not possessed of a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the lust of December.” These two are rivals in wit and in professing misogamy. Their dialogue reveals their love.

Beatrice is “never sad but when she sleeps and not even then” and we have her own word for it that she was “born to spread all mirth and no matter. There was a star danced and under that was I born”. John Palmer says that her natural high spirits are expressed as a “matter of words”. Her wit reveals that she is really in love with Benedick, that the “merry war” between these two is really a courtship in disguise.

Benedick, a “professed tyrant to their sex” also adopts this comical manner of courtship. He declares that Beatrice is a harpy who “speaks poniards and every word strikes. If her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there would be no living near her.” He says he would not marry her for she is the eternal Ate and would have made Hercules turn spit. The tricks in the garden set the ball rolling and finally, the tragedy in the church, makes them confess their love. The two who, as Palmer writes, “never meet but they jar”, confess their love. “Love is confessed in the full tide of her wrath and his amazement,” writes John Palmer. Hero’s repudiation causes Beatrice to ask help of the man whom she called “a very dull fool”. Benedick shows himself ready to challenge Claudio for the sake of a woman, although he had once declared that he would never marry and said that, if he did, they should put a notice over him: “Here is Benedick the married man.” Their witty dialogue, sparkling with alliteration and puns has prepared us for this happy ending. We realize that when Benedick wishes his horse had the speed of Beatrice’s tongue that he really admires her. When Beatrice says that she would rather lead apes in hell than marry, we see that this is because Benedick is the only man she will ever fancy. This bantering way into matrimony is much more evocative of deep affection than is the poetry which Claudio and Hero utter.

Shakespeare’s use of verse for Claudio and Hero helps to reveal the lack of passion. As John Palmer writes, Claudio “speaks like an angel”. The beautiful verse which flows from him underlines his idealistic love—the weak love of a youth incapable of passion. From the first he is ready to distrust his Prince and his Lady: “Tis certain so, the Prince woos for himself.” “Friendship is constant in all other things/Save in the office and affairs of love. . . . For Beauty is a witch,/Against whose charms, faith melteth into blood.” In the Church scene his poetry does not desert him but emphasises his idealistic love and lack of passion. He implicitly believes Don John and the scene at the window, and he cruelly repudiates Hero:

To me you seemed as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown;
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus or those pampered animals
That rage in savage sensuality.

Finally, Claudio declares that, because Hero has deceived him, he will “lock up all the gates of love” and on his eyelids shall “conjecture hang to turn all beauty into thought of harm.” On hearing of Hero’s death, his idealistic, passionless love is revealed in the way in which he remembers her and is still ready to marry her cousin. Throughout the play, Claudio’s flowing speech underlies his lack of passion and shows him to be a sentimental young soldier.

Shakespeare’s use of verses for Hero also adds to the impression that Hero and Claudio were not great lovers. When Hero does speak it is usually in verse, but like Virgilia in *Coriolanus* she is something of a “gracious silence”. As Smith writes, “Shakespeare’s task with the heroine was to keep our sympathy in check.” It is significant of the shallowness of her love that no word of love ever passes between Hero and Claudio—even at the end of the play.

Thus we see that the inverted technique of love-making adopted by Beatrice and Benedick is cleverly emphasised by their prose dialogue which sparkles with wit. Their continual jokes at each other reveal not an inveterate dislike but a mutual love, whereas the beautiful poetry spoken by Claudius only serves to underline the sentimental idealism of a love which is passionless. Indeed, the love of the comical pair leaves a greater impression than that of Claudio and Hero. As John Palmer writes, “In thinking about *Much Ado*, most people are apt to forget Hero and Claudio. They remember it as a comedy about Beatrice and Benedick.”

Candidate C

8. Shakespeare does indeed sharply distinguish both Sicilia and Bohemia, and Leontes and Polixenes; the contrast is emphasised in the formal introductory scene between Camillo and Archidamus, and reminders of it occur frequently until the final climax and dénouement, when it ceases to be important. Indeed, such a contrast is implicit in the nature of the play, which consists of two halves, the first built round the destructive passion of Leontes and the second round the constructive loves of Florizel and Perdita. Naturally each of these has to be developed in a completely different atmosphere, and while the atmosphere of the first half is developed in the Sicilian court that of the second is developed in the Bohemian countryside.

The courtiers who surround Leontes have many fine qualities. Paulina can be remarkably brave in defending the “good queen” before the enraged king; Antigonus is willing to “pawn the little blood I have left” in order to save the life of the baby Perdita; even Hermione, at the moment of greatest suffering, retains enough charity and love for her jealous husband to wish that her father could see her plight “with eyes of pity, not revenge”. However, these qualities are almost all that survives of the sane and gracious life of the court, with Hermione “not your gaoler then, but your kind hostess”, which is seen before Leontes is struck with his obsessive jealousy, which indeed they serve to emphasise by contrast. The passion of Leontes, which convinces the wise Camillo: “I must believe you, sir; I do,” destroys all his own good qualities which only begin to reappear after he realizes he has done wrong and “the heavens are angry”; it impresses itself so heavily on the audience, and the scenes which afford relief from it are so short, that little else of this first half is really noticed, and while Shakespeare is careful to present Sicilia as a normal country with an abnormal king, he lays so much more stress on his presentation of Leontes that the atmosphere of the first half is one of madness and destruction, of “You had a bastard by Polixenes and I but dreamed it”, and of “Nor nothing have these nothings, if this be nothing.”

In the first half, Polixenes is shown as an entirely honourable king, who wishes for “my best blood to turn to an infected jelly” if Leontes’ accusations are true, who can converse wittily and gallantly with Hermione: “To be your prisoner should import offending”, and who quite naturally escapes when he learns of Leontes’ suspicions. However, it is only when the scene changes to Bohemia that we learn he can feel any strong emotions, revealed above all by his most cruel threats to Hermione (Perdita): “I’ll have thy beauty lashed with briars and made more homely than thy state.” The presentation of his anger, however, has to differ substantially from that of Leontes’ jealousy. For while Leontes’ jealousy was a central theme and the whole first half of

the play was constructed around it, Polixenes' anger at the idea of his son married to a "sheep hook", Perdita, is merely an obstacle which the two lovers have to overcome on their way to discovering that Perdita is a princess, gaining their happiness, and at the same time providing the motive for Paulina to restore Hermione to Leontes. Since love, and not anger is the main theme, emphasis has to be placed above all on the happiness of the pastoral setting, the gaiety of the "sheep-shearing", and the cheerfulness of Autolycus: "Your merry heart goes all the way, / Your sad tires in a mile-a." The presentation of Bohemia in *The Winter's Tale* consists chiefly of these elements, as they accord best with the theme of successful love, and the hard work of the Shepherd who had to recover his sheep in the storm, Autolycus' thoughts of "gallows and knock" and, above all Polixenes' anger, cannot be emphasised too much lest they destroy the effectiveness of this presentation.

Thus while good aspects of Sicilia and bad aspects of Bohemia and Polixenes are suggested in *The Winter's Tale*, the main emphasis is on the jealousy of Leontes in the first half and the love of Florizel and Perdita in the second, and the presentation of the two countries is chiefly intended to emphasize these themes.

Candidate U

9. *The Winter's Tale* seems to be a masterpiece of contrast, it includes the tragedy of jealousy, and all the freshness of spring in the countryside, with their reconciliation in the final scene. Far from being the work of a tired dramatist bored with his art, it seems to pulse with life and vigour, and have the matured kindliness of its creator stamped on it.

The opening acts show the growth of a tragedy which seems set with infinite care and patience. With the development of Leontes' unreasonable jealousy, there is the development of corrupt and diseased images, which are in no way forced into the speeches of the characters. Camillo says: "Good my Lord, be cured of this diseased opinion and betimes, for 'tis most dangerous", while Leontes persists "were my wife's liver infected as her life, she would not live the running of one glass." In spite of this jealousy, Leontes seems to know that it is unreasonable: "Many thousands on us have the disease and feel it not", and "I play now, but so disgraced a part, whose issue will draw me to my grave, contempt and clamour will be my knell." Shakespeare has not allowed himself to become tired in the careful building up of the scenes leading to the trial scene. Hermione is depicted as a gracious and noble woman, who bears her sufferings in a regal way. In this she is contrasted with Antigonus' wife, Paulina, who goes to the king, impetuous with righteous anger on her behalf. The first half of the play ends with a tragedy, which is not loosely put together, as a tired dramatist would have done, but knit with the firm thread of the fear of sinning against marital love, which is put on a hallowed stand.

The second part of the *Winter's Tale* takes place in a pastoral setting. All the images of diseases and corruption have gone before the lyrical qualities of the spring imagery. Perdita is "Flora peeping through April's front", and "When you dance sweet, I would wish you a wave of the sea that you might ever do nothing but that." The rustic setting of the sheep-shearing produces the perfect setting for the worldly-wise rogue Autolycus, "a snapper up of unconsidered trifles". With delightful lightness that could only have been produced by an alert mind, he skips through the scenes with "What a fool Honesty is, and Trust his sworn brother a very simple gentleman!", and "How blest are we that are not simple men!" There seems to be a harmony between the thoughts of a benignant author and the audience; advice is kindly given,

Jog on, jog one the footpath way
And merrily hent the stile-a
Your happy heart goes all the way,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.

The final scenes do not seem inappropriate, the past tragedy cannot be altogether erased, and Leontes, the tyrant who suffered most, has gained in wealth of character, and deserves to find happiness.

The Winter's Tale is the work of an experienced dramatist, who knows mankind and life, but has not become tired or bitter. Throughout, Shakespeare seems to be pointing

out how good life is and trying again with fresh ability to use his art as the medium—tragedy, the play seems to say, is caused by man's "going against the very nature of things".

Candidate R

10. *Richard III* must be seen as the culmination of a series of plays in which Shakespeare shows us his philosophy of history. Thus Richard himself is in certain respects a puppet in the hands of the dramatist. He represents the outstanding example of an evil king. Yet from evil good comes, for Richard is fulfilling the law of history and by his own wicked deeds destroys not only himself but the evil around him which is inherited from the past.

In *Richard III* Shakespeare showed the king who lost his throne through his lack of character. But Carlisle's prophecy concerning the usurper, Henry IV, is fulfilled, and "future ages groan for this foul act", in the battles of the wars of the roses. The reign of Henry V shows the triumph of a king who by his own good qualities and legal inheritance of the throne becomes the "mirror of all Christian kings". But under Henry VI we see the rise of the house of York, and the murder of this king who by "his bookish rule hath pull'd England down".

At the beginning of *Richard III* the Yorkists are triumphant. Margaret, the Lancastrian widow of King Henry VI, has been defeated at Tewkesbury. Now Edward IV sits upon the throne. Yet all is not well. Not only is he a usurper but his brother Richard has already declared in *Henry VI* Part III:

Ay Edward will use women honourably
Would he were wasted marrow bones and all
So that from his loins no hopeful branch may spring
To cross me from the golden time I look for.

Richard is seen by Shakespeare as hideously deformed in body and mind. He declares simply: "I am determined to prove a villain." With bustling haste he ascends to the throne, and in so doing brings vengeance on his own house.

Edward IV, who lived a life of lust and sensuality, breaking off his betrothal, and in the Elizabethans' eyes incestuously marrying a widow, dies by surfeit. Clarence who had fought on the Lancastrian side but at Coventry broken his oath, is punished for his perjury by death in a malmsey butt. Rivers and Grey and Hastings who were present at Tewkesbury, where Edward and Richard stabbed to death the little Prince of Wales are executed. Buckingham who swears friendship to Queen Elizabeth but plots against her, meets a fitting death on All Souls Day. Even the innocent little Princes, the sons of Edward and Elizabeth, are suffocated in the Tower by Tyrrell.

Thus the Yorkist house is destroyed by one of its members. Yet Richard himself does not escape. For his terrible cruelty he suffers twofold retribution, the agony of his troubled conscience, and rebellions which lead to the battle of Bosworth Field and his death.

His defeat is mainly due to Henry Richmond who is descended from Henry V's wife Katherine and Owen Tudor. He represents the "minister of chastisement" whose text is "perpetual peace" and who proclaims mercy, thanks to God, and justice with due dignity.

Behind the evil deeds of Richard lurks the figure of Queen Margaret, the Yorkist. She, like some terrible Fury, longs for the slaying of her son at Tewkesbury and her husband's murder by Richard himself. Above all she regrets the loss of her throne. Her first words are a growling threat: "And lessen'd be that small, God I beseech thee." Emerging from the shadows she confronts the Yorkists, and like Cassandra who foretold the fate of Troy, she curses them and foretells their doom. On Richard she lays the heaviest curse:

The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul.
Thy friends suspect for traitors whilst thou livest
And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends.
No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine
Unless it be while some tormenting dream
Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils.

She leaves him with the words:

Live each of you the subjects to his hate
And he to yours and all of you to God's.

In Act IV, Scene iv, she appears once more to reap the fruits of her vengeance. Like a chorus in a Greek play she sums up dispassionately the fates of her enemies. Exultantly she leaves them:

Farewell York's wife and queen of sad mischance
These English woes will make me smile in France.

Margaret represents the Nemesis that overtakes the victorious but guilty house of York. At their deaths the victims recall her curses and repent their guilt. In his film, Laurence Olivier left out Queen Margaret and in so doing left out half the theme. For she is necessary as prophetess, nemesis and chorus. Without her there is no avenging figure following Richard through the torturous paths of his wickedness. When he dies a demonic personality has gone leaving a vacuum. Margaret is terrible and super-human but a great "adversary".

Richard himself is undoubtedly the originator of much evil in this play. He choses evil for his good against the world's laws and dashes himself to pieces. As Dowden says: "There is no mystery but a mind of a daemonic intensity." Yet, although Shakespeare sees in him an utterly evil king he gives him humanity by making him not only regal but grimly humorous. His asides such as "simple, plain Clarence", the "butt end of a mother's blessing", and "short summers have early springs" have a macabre wit. Throughout the play he bustles along and really enjoys himself.

Thus Richard himself is responsible for many of the evil deeds in the play, including a succession of murders. However, he has certain redeeming qualities, for Shakespeare is interested in him not only as a symbol but as a person. The play must be seen against the background of the Second and First Tetralogies. In particular it must be realised that much of the evil in the play is an inheritance from the crimes committed in the past: the Lancastrians at Wakefield, and the Yorkists at Tewkesbury. *Henry VI* and *Richard III* are united by the "steady political theme; the theme of order and degree and civil war, of crime and punishment, of God's mercy finally tempering God's justice, and of the belief that such had been God's way with England". Thus Queen Margaret, Richmond and Richard himself, eventually bring peace to the torn land, and evil is vanquished.

Candidate V

11. *Richard III* is a play essentially characterised by great cruelty and harshness. The man who dominates the play is a ruthless villain, terrible in his devoted ambition, dreadful in his unbridled ruthlessness and almost awe-inspiring in his amazing hypocrisy. The whole action of the drama consists of one murder after another. Hints of the murder of Henry VI and Edward Prince of Wales first emerge. Then comes the death of Clarence, those of Rivers, Vaughan and Grey, the little princes, Lady Anne, Buckingham, Hastings and finally Richard III himself. The plot if it may be so called is indeed one of brutality and crime. Even so there are in the play masterly touches of pity and humanity which though they do not fully counter-act the cruelty do to some extent act as a foil to it.

The part of the little princes in the play is perhaps the chief means of introducing these touches. Children on the stage generally serve to introduce notes of gentleness and sympathy and in this play it is particularly noticeable. First in the scene where Edward and Richard first meet in London there are touches of pathos which move the pity of the audience if not that of the characters present. Young York's request for his uncle's dagger for example is particularly touching. Later on, when the two are consigned to the Tower by Richard, there are most moving displays of motherly love by Queen Elizabeth. Her exhortation to the Tower itself is particularly touching: "Rude ragged nurse, old sullen playfellow", and a request to "use my babies well". Finally in the actual murder of the children there are strong touches of pity and humanity. Buckingham first of all is obviously horrified by the suggestion of the murder. Tyrrel himself flinches. The murder too is not shown on the stage but is merely reported by Tyrrel. The pathos of this report is intense. It is described in beautiful poetic language

and we are informed that the deed moved even the hearts of the two brutal villains whom Tyrrel had employed to carry out the deed. The fact that such villains of Tyrrel and his lackeys manage to feel pity for the children arouses even more strongly the pity of the audience.

There are also however touches of humanity in connection with other characters of the play. The murder of Clarence is in itself a very brutal and horrifying deed. But the cruelty of it is somewhat offset by the fact that after it has been done Edward IV feels terrible remorse. He had never actually intended that Clarence should die and his horror when he learns that his own brother has been put to death in accordance with his wishes is most moving.

The Duchess, Richard's mother, is another character who introduces touches of humanity and pity into the play. She is ready to sympathise deeply with the woes of others though as she points out, her woes are probably far greater than those of anyone else. For: forth from the "kennel of her womb has crept/This hell-hound that doth hunt them all to death"—Richard himself in fact. Even so she sympathises deeply with Queen Elizabeth when the little princes meet their doom and can even find it in her heart to pity the wretched disillusioned Queen Margaret: "Oh Harry's wife rejoice not at my woes... I have mourned for thine."

There are also touches of pity in the dealings of Queen Elizabeth with Lady Anne. Elizabeth might easily have been tremendously jealous when Anne gained the crown of England, since it was the position that she herself had been lately filling. But she does not allow envy to overcome the sympathy which she feels with Anne in her position as wife of Richard and thus does her best to comfort the wretched girl before her coronation.

In Richard himself too there are finally at the very end of the play—certainly not touches of pity but of humanity. For he is obviously at this point disturbed by his conscience as his troubled dream and disjointed speech on awakening show. Thus stirrings of conscience were awakening in him at long last—as indeed they ought to have done.

Thus with these touches of pity and humanity Shakespeare offsets to some extent the essential horror of *Richard III*.

Candidate W

11. In *Richard III* there is little suggestion of pity and humanity which act as a foil to the cruelty and harshness. Richard turns his deformity which might have aroused our pity into his greatest weapon:

I that am curtailed of this fair proportion
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature
Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
Into this breathing world scarce half made up...
...Why therefore since I cannot prove a lover
To entertain these fair well spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain.

Here we have Richard's own words for his career throughout the play.

The only pity that seems to be in the play is pity for the two little princes who have not deserved their fate, and the only person to show that is Elizabeth.

Richard had decided before the play opens that Clarence should be his first victim. When the curtain goes up and after Richard's soliloquy, Clarence is revealed as being on the way to the Tower.

Richard may be justified in what his part in putting Clarence in the Tower, springs from. Clarence has deserted his family and fought on the side of Henry VI and Warwick. To Richard who fought to get the throne for his father this was reason enough for murder.

Clarence also helped to murder Warwick. A man who betrays his family and kills those with whom he has fought deserves no pity; and Clarence gets none.

Edward "the wanton" dies naturally as a result of the kind of life he leads.

The two princes in their innocence excite our pity, but this only sharpens the harshness of Richard. Our pity for him is aroused when he tells Lady Anne that his love for

her has drawn tears to his eyes—something that even the death of his father could not do. In *Henry VI* we learn that Richard loved his father; fought to gain the crown for his father; shouted and cheered him on in battle. Richard hero-worshipped his father, and so we can pity him when his father died. That comes before *Richard III*, but after his father's death, Richard is alone. Throughout the play *Richard III* he had not one true friend. Buckingham and Stanley were afraid of him and all the others who work for him and with him, did so for the same reason as these two. Advancement under Richard was not hard for those who had courage to commit murder.

Rivers, Vaughan and Grey are executed and no-one can blame Richard for that deed. They were raised to high ranks on the marriage of Elizabeth, Lady Grey, to Edward. They fawned to the King and would have liked to be made the regents for Edward the elder of the two princes.

Hastings and Buckingham who rejoiced over every murder or execution that came before theirs, deserved no pity when theirs came. Richard was not wrong in striking them down when they deserted him. It was the usual thing for a political leader of that time to do.

The suggestions of pity and humanity in *Richard III* come at the end of the play. Whatever Richard has done through the play excites our admiration of him. He is audacious, witty, calm and collected in all that he does. At the end, before the battle day Richard gets pity and humanity from the audience. He is tired and alone. All those who professed friendship are only waiting for the day of battle to come to desert him. Only those who rely on his money give him faithful service and that most reluctantly.

He regains his cheerfulness towards the end when he reminds his men that the sun that does not shine on them rather shines on Richmond. He dies bravely: even when he had a chance to escape he refused. Richard is no coward.

Pity is certainly shown in the play, as illustrated, but it does not act as a foil to the humanity and harshness. We pity the characters but they fade and we forget that they had existence. In the play we are caught up in Richard's villainies; we admire him for his calm and ruthless behaviour. We are with him when he murders and feel only a short, sharp pang of regret. Most of his victims deserve their fate. Those who do not, do not suffer and are lost when the story continues.

Pity for Richard by the other characters is non-existent. At times they pity the others but not Richard. As Richard said in *Henry VI*, "I am myself alone".

It is the feeling that Richard is alone that makes people feel that what he did was done in defence. Even his own mother condemns him, and when a person is condemned by his mother, pity for that person "steps in" whatever they may or may not have done.

SECTION A

1. Choose **two** of the following passages, of which one must be taken from passages (a) to (d) and one from passages (e) to (g), then:

(i) rewrite each of your chosen passages in full in plain MODERN ENGLISH. Your chief object is to make the meaning of the passage as clear as possible;

(ii) comment on what interests you most in each. (You may be able to consider dramatic effectiveness, or use of imagery, or subject-matter, or diction, or more than one of these);

(iii) indicate in **two or three** sentences the exact context of each.

- (a) Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
Th'imperial jointress to this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,
Taken to wife; nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
Now follows that you know: young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death

Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Co-leagued with this dream of his advantage—
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bands of law,
To our most valiant brother.

(*Hamlet.*)

(b) A.

We will ourselves provide.
Most holy and religious fear it is
To keep those many many bodies safe
That live and feed upon your Majesty.

B.

The single and peculiar life is bound
With all the strength and armour of the mind
To keep itself from noyance; but much more
That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests
The lives of many. The cease of majesty
Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw
What's near it with it. It is a massy wheel,
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boist'rous ruin. Never alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

C.

Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;
For we will fetters put about this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

(*Hamlet.*)

(c) A. He was too hard for him directly, to say the troth on't; before Coriolanus scotch'd him and notch'd him like a carbonado.

B. An he had been cannibally given, he might have broil'd and eaten him too.

A. But more of thy news!

C. Why, he is so made on here within as if he were son and heir to Mars; set at upper end o'th'table; no question asked him by any of the senators but they stand bald before him. Our general himself makes a mistress of him, sanctifies himself with's hand, and turns up the white o'th'eye to his discourse. But the bottom of the news is, our general is cut i' th' middle and but one half of what he was yesterday, for the other has half by the entreaty and grant of the whole table. He'll go, he says, and sowl the porter of Rome gates by th' ears; he will mow all down before him, and leave his passage poli'd.

(*Coriolanus.*)

(d)

First he was
A noble servant to them, but he could not
Carry his honours even. Whether 'twas pride,
Which out of daily fortune ever taints
The happy man; whether defect of judgment,
To fail in the disposing of those chances
Which he was lord of; or whether nature,
Not to be other than one thing, not moving
From th' casque to th' cushion, but commanding peace
Even with the same austerity and garb
As he controll'd the war; but one of these—
As he hath spices of them all—not all,
For I dare so far free him—made him fear'd,
So hated, and so banish'd. But he has a merit
To choke it in the utterance. So our virtues
Lie in th' interpretation of the time;
And power, unto itself most commendable,
Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair
T'extol what it hath done.

(*Coriolanus.*)

- (e) When he shall hear she died upon his words,
 Th' idea of her life shall sweetly creep...
 Into his study of imagination,
 And every lovely organ of her life
 Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,
 More moving, delicate, and full of life,
 Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
 Than when she liv'd indeed. Then shall he mourn,
 If ever love had interest in his liver,
 And wish he had not so accused her—
 No, though he thought his accusation true.
 Let this be so, and doubt not but success
 Will fashion the event in better shape
 Than I can lay it down in likelihood.
 But if all aim but this be levell'd false,
 The supposition of the lady's death
 Will quench the wonder of her infamy.
 And if it sort not well, you may conceal her,
 As best befits her wounded reputation,
 In some reclusive and religious life,
 Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.

(Much Ado About Nothing.)

- (f) Not for Bohemia, nor the pomp that may
 Be thereat glean'd, for all the sun sees or
 The close earth wombs, or the profound sea hides
 In unknown fathoms, will I break my oath
 To this my fair belov'd. Therefore, I pray you,
 As you have ever been my father's honour'd friend,
 When he shall miss me—as, in faith, I mean not
 To see him any more—cast your good counsels
 Upon his passion. Let myself and Fortune
 Tug for the time to come. This you may know,
 And so deliver: I am put to sea
 With her who here I cannot hold on shore.
 And most opportune to her need I have
 A vessel rides fast by, but not prepar'd
 For this design. What course I mean to hold
 Shall nothing benefit your knowledge, nor
 Concern me the reporting.

(The Winter's Tale.)

- (g) A. Ay me, I see the ruin of my house!
 The tiger now hath seiz'd the gentle hind;
 Insulting tyranny begins to jet
 Upon the innocent and aweless throne.
 Welcome, destruction, blood and massacre!
 I see, as in a map, the end of all.
- B. Accursed and unquiet wrangling days,
 How many of you have mine eyes beheld!
 My husband lost his life to get the crown;
 And often up and down my sons were toss'd
 For me to joy and weep their gain and loss;
 And being seated, and domestic broils
 Clean over-blown, themselves the conquerors
 Make war upon themselves—brother to brother,
 Blood to blood, self against self. O, preposterous
 And frantic outrage, end thy damned spleen,
 Or let me die, to look on death no more!

(Richard III.)