

Candidate 1 evidence

Specimen question paper

Section 1

Question 4 – A Taste of Honey

In my essay I will discuss 4 key moments in the play 'A Taste of Honey' by Shelagh Delaney, that showcase some of Helen's personality traits. I will discuss Helen's sarcastic, rude, judgemental, and violent personality traits, in my essay.

During Act 2 scene 1, we see Helen's sarcastic personality. During this moment Helen is frustrated with Jo's situation of being pregnant and living in a one bedroom flat in a rundown community which she shares with Geoff. She blames Jo for her own situation and believes she is too stupid and naïve to be acting like this. She is angry at Jo and begins to take her frustration out on Geoffrey, as when he interrupts her she says, "And what's your part in this little Victorian melodrama Nursemaid!" This quote shows Helen's sarcastic personality as she begins making fun of Geoff and his role in Jo's life. She believes Geoff is the one taking care and providing for Jo, which she finds unusual, and also the only thing she can really use against him in this moment. I would use acting concepts to highlight this personality. I would use a loud volume and derogatory tone of voice to suggest Helen's disgust towards Geoff and his lifestyle, but also proving that Helen is using her sly sarcasm as a way to push Geoff and his ego down. I would also use direct eye contact when saying the line to show Helen's sarcastic comment is directly aimed at Geoff. I would use open body language, for example my right arm would be point right at Geoff with my left hand resting on my hip, to show Helen's stern look and disgust towards Geoff. Finally, I would use facial expressions, for example lips pursed and brows scrunched to show Helen's superiority, but also to show how annoying Geoff is being for her.

During Act 2 scene 1, we see Helen's rude personality. During this moment Helen is annoyed with Geoff's back chat and cheeky attitude. She feels ambushed by Geoff, as he has called her out for her bad mothering. She does not agree with Geoff's statements, and is getting fed up with being called out again and again as she says, "Oh shut up, you put years on me. Anyway, I'm having nothing to do with it. She's more than I can cope with, always has been." This quote shows Helen's rude personality as she has completely had enough of Geoff and his irritating remarks. She believes she isn't responsible for Jo anymore, however Geoff disagrees making it harder for them to get along as they both have contrasting opinions. This confuses and aggravates Helen causing her to react in a rude manner. In this moment I would use acting concepts to highlight this personality. I would use a loud volume

and frustrated tone of voice, to show Helen's response is out of irritation as she doesn't know what else to say. I would use emphasis on the words "shut up" to show Helen's immediate reaction was out of anger and frustration with Geoff, also showing her rudeness. I would use closed body language, for example crossing my arms, to show Helen feels a bit torn down as she realises what Geoff is saying is true, making her feel a bit small and vulnerable causing her rude remark. Finally, I would use indirect eye contact; to show she has had enough of Geoff and cannot be bothered to even looking him, which makes him feel ignored and unimportant, another aspect to her rude personality.

During Act 2 scene 1, we see Helen's Judgemental personality. During this moment Helen is frustrated by Jo not taking proper care of herself and her looks. She feels disappointed in Jo and upset with how Jo looks, as she says "Look at you! Why don't you take a bit of pride in yourself? Grow your hair properly?" This quote showcases Helen's opinion on Jo and her appearance. It also shows that even though Jo is in a tough situation right now, Helen refuses to acknowledge their struggling relationship, she also refuses to comfort her and instead judges her based on how she appears. In this moment I would use acting concepts to highlight this personality. I would use a loud volume and disappointed tone of voice to show Helen's disapproval towards Jo and the way she handles her appearance. I would use facial expressions, for example scrunching my nose and lips, to show disgust towards what her daughter looks like. I would also use direct eye contact when saying the line to show Helen's directness and strong opinion against Jo and her looks. Finally, I would use close proxemics between Helen and Jo to show Helen is acting quite upfront towards Jo and openly expressing her disappointment about what she sees in front of her.

During Act 2 scene 1, we see Helen's violent personality. During this moment Helen is feeling quite bullied and beaten down by Jo's words. Jo expresses how much of a bad mother Helen has been which aggravates Helen and pushes her buttons. Jo is continuously trying to hurt and offend Helen, which Helen takes and gives right back, they both try and push each other down with things that hurt or are offensive to the other. This deeply annoys Helen causing her to get rowdy and overwhelmed with anger as she says, "I'll kill her. I'll knock the living daylight out of her." This quote shows Helen's violent personality, as she has clearly snapped because of something Jo has said. It also shows how easily her anger can take control and how consuming it can be, as it doesn't seem like Helen can control her anger. In this moment I would use acting concepts to highlight this personality. I would use a loud volume and angry tone of voice to assert authority within the room letting Jo and the audience know Helen is serious and angry. I would use emphasis on the words "I'll kill her" to highlight the overwhelming emotion of anger. I would also use direct eye contact with Jo to showcase that all Helen sees when looking at Jo is red because Jo has pushed all of Helen's buttons, to a point where now Helen is uncontrollable. Finally, I would use closed body language, for example hands clenched in a fist by my side, to highlight the immense anger and frustration that Helen is holding onto.

In 'A Taste of Honey' by Shelagh Delaney there are a lot of significant personalities within the play, Helen being one of them. Delaney perfectly highlights her personality through different types of emotions and aspects of Helen, making her a very interesting character.

Section 2

Question 8 - Julie

Julie is an adaptation of August Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, produced by the National Theatre and performed in 2018. *Miss Julie* was set in the 18th century and for its time was one of the most socially forward plays. Strindberg wrote things that had never been written or performed before because the conventions were simply unheard of. Julie transports this play into the 21st century, where the social aspects of this play are still extremely relevant and important. Some social issues discussed within this play are money, class differences, race, and mental health. Director Carrie Cracknell and designer Tom Scutt worked together on the set design which enhanced the audience's impact through the design of the space. Acting was also used to enhance the audience impact, using classic conventions, actors Vanessa Kirby, Eric Kobi Abrefa and Thalissa Teixeira brought their characters to life.

In the opening scene of the play, we are introduced to the set and the characters in the play. As the curtains rise, we see a two-tiered stage with an upper and lower level. On the upper level a party is in full swing, people are dancing and drinking, having a good time. On the lower level of the stage there is a large kitchen fitted with a long table at the centre stage. On all three walls there are cabinets and cupboards and all the kitchen appliances you might need. The kitchen is white and stale, there is no life or quirk to it whilst strobe lights flash on the upper level. We see a woman moving about in the kitchen cleaning bottles and rubbish from the counter that have been left by party goers. This moment sets the tone for the rest of the play, of class differences, which is the main issue of the performance. The performance stage helps with the audience impact at this moment as it shows the physical divide between the classes. Whilst the upper-class party upstairs is carefree, the lower-class maid is left downstairs to clean the messes made by the upper class. The focus shifts back to the upper level of the stage where a stylized and almost choreographed 'dance' happens at the party. Julie is in the centre of the stage, whilst everyone moves around her, making her the focus of this moment. Proxemics is used in this moment, the characters are very close to one another whilst leaving space for Julie in the middle. Her movements are relaxed and ungraceful, she looks as if she belongs right here in this time and place and we get the feeling that the world does revolve around her. The focus then shifts back over to Kristina cleaning in the kitchen; she in her own way seems very carefree and unbothered. Using the whole space of the stage, she moves around the kitchen with grace, from upstage left to downstage right, wiping surfaces, and making the place seem spotless. This contrast drives the social aspect of class differences and has a massive audience impact, showing that in their own ways, Julie and Kristina belong in their own respective places and that is the way it will always be due to their class difference and social imbalance.

Another moment that highlights the social impacts in the play is when we see the social imbalance between Julie and Jean at the end of the party scene when Julie leaves the party upstairs to go into the kitchen. When she enters from the stage left, she spots Jean (her father's chauffeur) standing on the other side of the kitchen, with closed body language,

both his arms and legs are crossed, and he has a stern facial expression showing his reluctance to this conversation. She stumbles over to him and begins to beg him to join her upstairs for a dance. Proxemics were used in this moment to highlight the relationship between Jean and Julie. Julie is obviously intoxicated, and Jean is in a romantic relationship with Kristina although Julie does not seem to care as she enters his personal space and stands very close to him as she speaks. Julie uses a loud volume despite how close she is to Jean and uses a whiny tone of voice. Reluctantly Jean gives in to Julie's pleading and follows her upstairs while she leads him by their joined hands. This moment shows the social imbalance between the pair to the audience. Jean and Julie are incredibly different people, she comes from a wealthy upper-class family, whereas Jean comes from a working background and is employed by Julie's father. Not only do they have a social imbalance but also a power imbalance as well. This is highlighted in the moment by Jean's reluctance and Julie's insistence. If this were a different situation Jean would most likely have said no but due to being employed by Julie's family, Jean felt pressured to say yes for fear of consequences which sets the basis of their relationship and builds grounds for the rest of the performance. The stage was also used intentionally to give the audience a greater sense of understanding in this moment. When Julie descends from the stairs on the left side of the stage, it is almost metaphorical. Julie is leaving her 'pedestal' of the upstairs party to hang out with the employees of her household, which again highlights the social imbalance of the characters. The use of the stage and physicality in this scene is also incredibly important for understanding Jean and Julie's relationship later in the play. The kitchen is very large, but Julie intentionally gravitates towards Jean although she does not need to be, showing how the two characters interact with each other and how it is so different, one being reluctant and one being insistent.

Another moment in this play which shows the social imbalances between the characters is a quiet moment between Julie and Kristina. Julie descends from her party yet again to join Kristina who is sat downstage left on the bench of the large table. Proxemics is used as Julie sits closely to Kristina showing their close relationship. Julie expresses her love and care for Kristina in her drunken state. Julie exclaims with clarity in her voice that Kristina is a good person. Shortly after Kristina excuses herself to take a phone call from her young son, she answers the phone as she walks off stage with an elated tone of voice. This leaves Julie sitting alone in the kitchen. This is a very small moment but highlights to the audience a massive difference between the two characters which is that even though Kristina is from a lower class than Julie, Kristina is still the happier and more successful character. We see this from the fact that Julie has hidden herself in alcohol and drugs for the entirety of the play so far, intoxicating herself as a distraction from her life. We also see the sadness in Julie through her facial expression of scrunched eyebrows and soft eyes when Kristina leaves that Julie is happier when Kristina is about, but we also get the impression that Julie is envious of Kristina's simple happiness. Although Julie has more money, that does not mean she is happy with her life. The performance space also highlights this to the audience at the moment. The set is white and stale, the kitchen has no personality, and it can be imagined that the rest of the house is like this as well. Void of life and love, we can interpret that this reflects Julie's life. Comments made by the characters tell the audience that Julie has an unhealthy relationship with her father which negatively affects her life and her ability to be happy. The set design was intended to have a cold and unwelcoming atmosphere to mirror the cold and

sad life of Julie to help with the understanding of Julies character. Particularly in this moment with Julie and Kristina, when Kristina exits, Julie is left to bathe in the cold stale lights of the kitchen showing her unhappiness.

To conclude, in this essay social aspects of the play Julie were highlighted through acting and use of performance space and the impact they had on the audience. We can summarise that there is a stark social imbalance between Julie and Kristina and Jean due to their wealth and class differences. This is shown through the moments between the characters, and we can see that although they are in different classes, that does not mean that the upper-class personality is happier and is in fact the one who struggles the most.