

Marking Notes | J2 2017 | Prelims | H1&H2 | Paper 1 | Sections A—C

A note on the notes

If at any point during this document I discuss a concept, an interpretation or a use a word that you do not fully comprehend then please make sure that you take measures to find out what I mean.

Section A

As I have been intimating to you during Term 3, if you look at the themes of the A Level Papers over the past 10 years, love and “loss” of some kind are often covered. (You could class the consequences of war as a form of loss.) Hence, I wanted to expose you to these themes, having already tried to stretch you with some of the more contemporary themes during J2 (mental health, migration, etc.). You should, therefore, be well-rounded in your thinking processes regarding a range of themes and contexts.

I have included both H1 and H2 notes for the poems here because even though you will not have been examined on both, you may like to read the poems in your own time and then check my comments for the type of things you can say about them. It will be extra practise for your appreciation skills.

H1

<p>I TRY TO EXPLAIN TO MY CHILDREN A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE WHICH SAYS THAT ACCORDING TO A COMPUTER A NUCLEAR WAR IS LIKELY TO OCCUR IN THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS - Baron Wormser (1948—)</p> <p>Death (I say) used to have Two faces—one good, one bad. The good death didn't like to do it, Kill people, dogs. insects, flowers, But had to do it. It was his duty</p> <p>He would rather have been playing cards. Without him the earth would get too crowded, The soil would become tired, feuds would Overtake love. That was what death Believed—and when we thought about it</p> <p>We agreed.</p> <p>The bad death was a bully. He would kill angels if he could. He settled for children, poets, All flesh increased by spirit.</p> <p>He bragged and made bets and said Disparaging things about the human race. People made his job easy, he said.</p> <p>They were, full of a confusion that Soon became hatred. He would shake His head in wonder, but he understood. The nations of the world offered him</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Title: matter-of-fact tone, newspaper article connotes facts/information, computer and nuclear connote scientific development. The latter two elements also point to a contemporary setting. □ Tone of title is undercut by the personal nature of the poem with the father creating a fable or parable about death as he tries to relate a news story to his children. □ Simplicity of times past. Good and bad. Dichotomous relationship. □ First person perspective. Parentheses allow the reader to understand the father is cognizant of the metaphor he is creating for the children. He says this. He doesn't believe/think it? □ Death personified. Playful. A reluctant participant in maintaining balance in the world. □ Internal half-rhyme with believed and agreed, emphasizing the positivity of these two words compared to the actions of death. □ Paradox – death believing in love. □ Compassion. □ Collective pronoun – father and children. □ Register is calm, conversational, and language is simple – the father is speaking to children. □ A conceit is created in order for the children to relate to the reality of nuclear war. □ Playground language for his children to relate to an adult subject matter. □ Why can't he? A set of rules ascribed to imaginary creatures. □ Tone of making bets different to the tone of playing cards earlier, though similar pastimes. □ Fall of man alluded to. □ Hatred contrasted to love in previous phase of poem.
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<p>Their love.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The new death doesn't Have a face. He will kill us but In the meantime he wants to kill life too He is calm, devoted, gradual. He is crazy. The other two deaths Do not like him, the way he wears</p> <p>A tie as if death were an office, The way he wants to be efficient. Fate and fortune bore him. He has Reasons. There cannot be enough death, He says. You will put us out of business</p> <p>The other two say, but he doesn't listen. Things seem the same, my children, but They aren't.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ New death – like the contemporary computer and nuclear energy. Loss of a face – loss of personality. □ Language is first calculated... then evokes madness. This death is fickle and thus incomprehensible. □ This seems to contrast – fate and fortune do not seem congruent with reason. This itself reflects the contradictory nature of postmodernism, the technological age and the contemporary world. □ Callous. Emotionless. Formal. □ Change is inevitable? Ambiguous line to close. Things seem the same as the “death” parable? Or things in general seem the same but they’re changing? □ Poem in three phases. Delineated by the indented lines as each new death appears. Old versus new. The poem laments the technological age – understood through the title – by contrasting the simplicity of the past with the nihilism of the present.
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<p>SUNSET II</p> <p>Sunset, now that we're finally in it is not what we thought.</p> <p>Did you expect this violet black</p> <p>soft edge to outer space, fragile as blown ash and shuddering like oil, or the reddish</p> <p>orange that flows into your lungs and through your fingers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Atwood uses the image and process of a sunset to explore the experience of a relationship ending with strong use of natural and sensory imagery. □ Who are the 'we'? □ Expectation of a sunset is beauty? Is this an ending? □ The black, space, ash imagery may suggest so. The language is decaying here. □ Yet colour returns in the rest of the stanza, and the language becomes more comforting; smooth, warm. □ Repetition of 'sh'. Replicates the effect of breathing? Waves? Later invoked. □ Jarring simile – would one expect oil to shudder? □ Imagery. Synesthesia as the visual sunset turn tangible and flows into the addressee. □ Repetition of fold – the verb form would suggest becoming smaller, while the noun connotes layers building - again the contrast between the beauty of a sunset and the melancholy of an ending.
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<p>The waves smooth mouthpink light over your eyes, fold after fold. This is the sun you breathe in, pale blue. Did you expect it to be this warm?</p> <p>One more goodbye, sentimental as they all are. The far west recedes from us like a mauve postcard of itself and dissolves into the sea.</p> <p>Now there's a moon,</p> <p>an irony. We walk north towards no home, joined at the hand.</p> <p>I'll love you forever, I can't stop time.</p> <p>This is you on my skin somewhere in the form of sand.</p> <p>Margaret Atwood (1939–)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▢ Neologism – mouthpink, an inventive piece of diction to connect the body to nature again. ▢ Breathing sun rather than air. ▢ Repeated questions in the first stanza. The lover uncertain. ▢ Sunset a metaphor for the end of something? ▢ Cyclical; the sunset repeats itself. A sense of ubiquity in the image. ▢ Intriguing use of indefinite article for the moon. Is there more than one? ▢ What is the irony? ▢ Contrast between no home and joined on the next line. They are together but have no home. Perhaps the irony is this, rather than the moon. ▢ Atwood expands the scope of the poem to the universal. Time now joins the natural cycle or day and night, speaking to humankind's inability to affect this. The speaker lacks agency here. ▢ The image of the lover as sand seems to relate to the 'sh' sound of blown ash and nature flowing into the addressee earlier. ▢ The lovers seem to return to, or be absorbed by nature as the 'hand', through rhyme, turns to 'sand'. ▢ Stanzas are irregular, lacking a structured metre or any rhyme scheme, though sound devices are used to create connections between the lovers' experiences. Ironically, they do generally get smaller as the poem goes on, though the ideas become vast as the lovers connect to the natural world for eternity.
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H2

Option A

Notable comparisons:

- Both speakers are *writing* about their love; conceit used by the poets
- Both poets use *celestial* imagery – stars and moon
- Both speakers experience a form of *pain* through love
- Both poets use the idea of *burning* in love
- First poem seems to end in *union*, whereas the second poem ends *unrequited*

<p>POEM I WROTE SITTING ACROSS THE TABLE FROM YOU</p> <p>if I had two nickels to rub together I would rub them together</p> <p>Like a kid rubs sticks together until friction made combustion</p> <p>and they burned a hole in my pocket</p> <p>into which I would put my hand and then my arm</p> <p>and eventually my whole self— I would fold myself</p> <p>into the hole in my pocket and disappear into the pocket of myself, or at least my pants</p> <p>but before I did like some ancient star</p> <p>I'd grab your hand</p> <p>Kevin Varrone (1970—)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Poem is based on a conceit of writing a poem. Self-reflexive. First person perspective. Addressee a lover. □ Nickels – suggests American context. □ Repetition of 'together' in the first three lines – the speaker is desperate for connection. □ Rub together – action mirrors a relationship, action of lovers. □ Speaker is feeling like a child – the effect of love. □ Scientific language – contrasts to the simplicity of previous line. □ Enjambment, reveals the burning to be in an unexpected place. □ Repetition of 'myself' and 'pocket'. Self in contrast to 'together' from earlier in the poem, as the speaker seems to become self-obsessed, before finally revealing he's taking his lover with him. □ Stanza structure – two lines each apart from the final, single line. Ironic, as the idea in the last line is about the communion of two people, yet the line is single. Or perhaps that makes sense, as they join as one. The two-line stanzas previously have mostly been about the speaker's actions on his own. □ Alludes to the death of a star. Image of a star, from time past, a vast idea, contrasts to folding in on oneself. □ Wants to be with his lover in death, forever. Forceful language of 'grab' reinforces the insistence of 'together' repeated three times earlier.
<p>THE LETTER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Again, the love poem is based on the conceit of writing the lover a letter. Both speakers seem to go through some anguish, or suggest they

<p>Little cramped words scrawling all over the paper</p> <p>Like draggled fly's legs,</p> <p>What can you tell of the flaring moon Through the oak leaves?</p> <p>Or of my uncertain window and the bare floor Spattered with moonlight? Your silly quirks and twists have nothing in them</p> <p>Of blossoming hawthorns</p> <p>And this paper is dull, crisp, smooth, virgin of loveliness</p> <p>Beneath my hand.</p> <p>I am tired, Beloved, of chafing my heart against The want of you; Of squeezing it into little inkdrops, And posting it.</p> <p>And I scald alone, here, under the fire Of the great moon.</p>	<p>have to perform difficult tasks in order to communicate their love.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The words are given life, moving. Though belittled by the speaker herself – are her words enough? □ Simile – the image is somewhat grotesque, ironically for a love poem. □ Multiple questions asked. □ Interesting image of an uncertain window. Personified. □ Bare floor spattered – an image that reflects the paper of the letter spattered with ink? This idea is resolved at the end of the poem as the moon comes to reflect the passion of the lover, and thus the passion in the letter. □ Nature imagery – the moon is barely illuminating the situation for the speaker, though. □ There seems to be a messiness about love – scrawling, draggled, spattered. The language is unruly. □ Again, the nature imagery includes a contrast. There is the potential of pain and danger as well as beauty in a hawthorn. □ Crisp and smooth seem at odds. Sexual metaphor in that the paper – a virgin of loveliness – will have to be physically altered in order to express love... much like the communion of a relationship. □ The hand is an image across both poems. Used to write the poems. □ Metaphor of squeezing one's heart into ink to write the letter. The letter is "heartfelt", and comes at the expense of painful actions such as chafing and squeezing. □ Burning is an image across both poems. Fire an unusual metaphor for the moon – often described in blues, pales, light. All these contrasts in the imagery contribute to the
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<p style="text-align: right;">Amy Lowell (1874 – 1925)</p>	<p>tortured lover's feelings. Both speakers are burnt by love.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▢ Moon used again, like the star in the previous poem, to expand the profundity of the love to a universal level. ▢ The language evokes nature, pain, a tactile sense of ruination and sexual desire simultaneously. ▢ Structure, in two stanzas, the lineation is alternately long and short, seems to reflect the conflicted mindset of the speaker. One moment she seems articulate and expressive; the next moment resigned and curtails her thoughts.
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Option B

Notable Comparisons

1. Contexts are different – first world war versus a contemporary American war (presumably Vietnam)
2. Both poems focus on the experience of a veteran returned home (again, England in the first, America in the second)
3. The notions of emptiness and nightmares, loss and fear, are common.

<p>THE VETERAN</p> <p>We came upon him sitting in the sun— Blinded by war, and left. And past the fence</p> <p>Wandered young soldiers from the Hand & Flower, Asking advice of his experience.</p> <p>And he said this and that, and told them tales; And all the nightmares of each empty head</p> <p>Blew into air. Then, hearing us beside— “Poor kids, how do they know what it's like?” he said.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▢ This poem is set in England during the first world war. The setting is seemingly outside a pub, a casual and tranquil scenario undercut by the horrific experience. ▢ Who are the 'we' in this poem? A group young soldiers with the potential of going to war as the 'he' has done. The fact that 'he' is not named lends itself to the idea of dehumanisation in war, just as his 'blind[ness]'; he is losing parts of his identity. ▢ Likely the name of an English pub. ▢ Experience becomes a jarring idea when we discover the soldier's age later. ▢ The idea of folklore, oral tradition invoked. ▢ The enjambment here is stark. Head / blew. The empty head seems to connote a lack of ability to think – perhaps due to war fatigue – until we reach the next line which informs of a more visceral and bloody version of an 'empty head'. We do already have the nightmares established, but the realisation of violence on the new line with 'blew into the air' jolts the
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<p>And we stood there, and watched him as he sat Turning his sockets where they went away; Until it came to one of us to ask “And you’re—how old?” “Nineteen the third of May.”</p> <p>Margaret I. Postgate (1893–1980)</p>	<p>reader out of the comfort of telling ‘tales’. The imagery of war itself is fairly light aside from the ‘blinded’ and ‘blew into the air’. This is the centerpiece image of the poem. The structure is built around this revelation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The youth of the soldier contrasts to the experiences he has gone through. This alludes to the age of many soldiers in WWI. □ Postgate leaves the reader with a chilling reminder of the young lives affected by WWI. This is heightened by the indent of the line, physically highlighting this tragedy.
<p>VETERANS OF THE SEVENTIES</p> <p>His army jacket bore the white rectangle of one who has torn off his name. He sat mute</p> <p>at the round table where the trip-wire veterans ate breakfast. They were foxhole buddies</p> <p>who went stateside without leaving the war.</p> <p>They had the look of men who held their breath and now their tongues. What is to say</p> <p>beyond that said by the fathers who bent lower and lower as the war went on, spines curving toward the ground on which sons sat sandbagged</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The seventies in the title, coupled with the reference to America suggests the Vietnamese-American war. □ The subject of the opening lines, ‘he’, is unnamed, his name tag has also been torn off his uniform, and he has no voice. Loss of identity, dehumanizing consequences of war. □ Soldiers become identified by the activities they conduct in war; dealing with trip-wires, being ‘foxhole buddies’. These are their new identities. □ They have returned home but the war still haunts them. □ The experience is unspeakable. Sensory imagery. □ Grotesque image of spines curving. Humans get closer and closer to the ground. Perhaps speaks to our psychological wellbeing as well as the physical action of hiding from the enemy. Our behaviour has become baser in war? □ Fathers and sons are brought in here – the relationship making the experience more personal and affecting than the ‘he’ earlier.

<p>with ammo belts enough to make fine lace of enemy flesh and blood. Now these who survived,</p> <p>who got back in cargo planes emptied at the front,</p> <p>lived hiddenly in the woods behind fence wires strung through tin cans. Better an alarm</p> <p>than the constant nightmare of something moving</p> <p>on its belly to make your skin crawl</p> <p>with the sensory memory of foxhole living.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Marvin Bell (1937–)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▢ Juxtaposed image of the delicacy and beauty of lace, with the violent and visceral flesh and blood. ▢ Sense of loss in the term ‘emptied’ – repeated language from the first poem too. ▢ Beautiful adverb neologism – hiddenly. Perhaps no words previously existed to describe their new lives accurately. They seem to imitate their experiences in the war in their post-war lives; the experience never leaves them: in the woods, fence wires, tin cans. All language that could be applied to the SE Asian guerrilla combat they have experienced. ▢ Nightmare appears as it does in the first poem. The spectre of the war seems more harrowing than the ‘alarm’ of a tangible threat. ▢ Duality in this metaphor. As the unknown aggressor crawls it simultaneously makes your skin crawl. ▢ The pronoun has become ‘your’ which now implicates the reader in the terrifying experience, as opposed to just the third person veterans, and the father and sons from earlier in the poem. ▢ Ironic to end the poem with the notion of living, when the entire poem has created the sense of trauma, fear and loss.
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Section B

2. (a) Critically examine the significance of Newland Archer being a “dilettante” in *The Age of Innocence*.

dilettante

noun

a person who cultivates an area of interest, such as the arts, without real commitment or knowledge.

synonyms

dabbler, potterer, tinkerer, trifler, dallier;

archaic

a person with an amateur interest in the arts.

You must be able to engage directly with what the term means, especially in the context of Newland's character, and then link it to some kind of significance. *Why* is it important that he is a dilettante? *How* does it affect the narrative? What is Wharton therefore saying about *him*, or by extension *men*, or by extension *society* at this time?

The premise for this question regarding Newland is that he feigns interest, and/or he doesn't see things through to the end, and/or that he has pretensions without substance. How is this demonstrated in the novel? And what does that mean for the narrative?

Possible (not exhaustive) paragraph ideas:

1. Newland's dilettantism is used by Wharton to reveal the superficiality of society.
2. By crafting Newland as a dilettante, Wharton unveils the performative nature of this society, being more concerned with artifice than reality.
3. Wharton presents Newland as a dilettante to indicate that the unflinching regulations of Old New York restrict individuals from pursuing their interests.
4. The significance of Newland's dilettantism is that, through this characterisation, Wharton makes clear to the readers from the novel's exposition that her protagonist will never leave May, evoking greater poignancy in so doing.
5. Wharton's presentation of Newland as a dilettante is one way in which the reader can observe her attitude towards the men of this society as feckless and irresponsible.
6. Newland's role as a dilettante is significant in that Wharton employs him to criticise the arbitrary distinctions this society places on different demographics, namely; [and here you could use America v Europe or a class divide].

Text References (not exhaustive):

Opening of the novel:

*"He had dawdled over his cigar because he was **at heart** a dilettante, and thinking over a pleasure to come often gave him a subtler satisfaction than its realisation."*

Close of the novel:

*"[H]e would **always** be by nature a contemplative and a dilettante; but he had had high things to contemplate, great things to delight in..."*

By remembering these two quotes, you should immediately note that this is part of Newland's character that endures throughout. The biggest example of this is his inability to approach Ellen at the end of the novel, despite his ostensible "freedom".

Performances:

Use the opera passage and the "The Shaughraun" passage. Both of these relate to Newland's artificial existence. He watches rather than partakes, and the metaphors on the stage also relate to his life, reinforcing the idea of his dilettantism. "He loves me, he loves me not" in the performance of Faust at the beginning of the novel is a metaphor – it tells us about Newland's fickle treatment of women.

Newland's behaviour at the opera and public functions – arriving late, being dressed in certain ways – also links to the ideas of "Taste" and "Form", which explicate that this society itself is dilettante in nature. They maintain the pretense of being interested in artistic performances, but the real function of these is not the appreciation of artistic endeavour, yet an opportunity to present themselves well in public, as well as judge others for potentially not presenting themselves well. Therefore, Newland as a dilettante is a manifestation of society, for Wharton, which allows readers to understand her critique on this societal characteristic.

The shore (and other occasions of Newland and Ellen interacting):

The fact that Newland, for once, is given license by the family to approach Ellen yet chooses not to is again indicative of his dilettante nature. The action and imagery in this passage again feed into the idea that he will never act upon his feelings for Ellen. To make a broader point, you may want to link this to the idea that society does not allow for individuality or the pursuit of one's interests. Thus you can make it a contextual point about Wharton's comment on the strictures of society, rather than simply a stylistic point about the relationship that is destined to remain unfulfilled.

Newland's foils:

Using Winsett and/or M. Rivière, people who perhaps lead lives of letters to a more authentic degree than Newland, can help to highlight Newland's character and elucidate Wharton's comment on the community of which Newland is a part. When interacting with these two men, Newland is seen at once admiring their intellect and pursuits of higher thought, while at the same time being unable to respect them fully. Readers can thus understand that there is a discrepancy between Old New York and other communities within the city, as well as between Old New York (or maybe American) and Europeans (or foreignness in general).

The motif of "halfness"

You could use those moments, as discussed in class, when Newland is described to be halfway towards or away from something/someone. This recurrent image reveals his indecisiveness; torn between two women and two worlds. You could link this to the fickleness or hypocrisy of society; being caught between the old and new worlds, using many traditions and artefacts from the old world whilst simultaneously trying to distance themselves and making derisive comments about Europeans and their culture. Or perhaps you can link this to society being on the precipice of change, with the transition to the last chapter helping to delineate that this has happened. Though he never concretises his relationship with Ellen, he does develop in other ways.

2. (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to Wharton's presentation of travel here and elsewhere in the novel.

Please do not forget to analyse the passage. It is specifically chosen for the question and requires close analysis, with reference to literary presentation – how meaning is created through style, language and form. Please see below for analysis of the passage.

Again, you are simply looking for three strains that you can analyse and extrapolate across the novel. The wisest links for you to make will also be about travel, considering this is what the question is asking you about. Some people were making links about characteristics or other themes – this is not a direct response to the question. You should be making points about how Wharton uses travel to make wider comments on the characters and society. Indeed, this should not just be a character study. The question is not about Newland and May, specifically. It is about the presentation of travel and uses a passage that happens to feature Newland and May.

Many students seem to take an entirely dim view of May in this passage. Remember that we are reading through the lens of Newland's experience (but do not make the mistake to say that he is the narrator – he is not the narrator) so the language and perspective is coloured by his opinions. Think about the ironies in the passage concerning what Newland perceives May to lack interest in and what May's actions actually show. What is Newland doing all the while, too? The passage is all about Newland's assessment of May, rather than what Newland himself engages in (reminiscent of the dilettante question, perhaps?). You know that by the end of the text May proves not to be a complete wallflower, so you may want to consider how the motif of travel helps to reveal this aspect of Newland's misunderstanding.

Possible (not exhaustive) paragraph ideas:

1. Wharton uses the motif of travel to illustrate the **insular** nature of New York's upper class.
2. Wharton employs travel to comment on the **xenophobic** attitude of this community towards outsiders.
3. Travel is a prominent feature of the novel, through which Wharton presents the **vacuity** of relationships in *The Age of Innocence*.
4. Having established the characters' discomfort when travelling outside of American, Wharton comments on the **parochial attitude** of these New Yorkers towards their **European** contemporaries.
5. Wharton crafts the Newland Archer's wedding tour to reveal Newland's **lack of understanding** of his new wife, May, thus foreshadowing his disorientation in Book II.
6. Travel is presented by Wharton as **ritualistic**; simply another type of **performance** carried out by Old New York society, rather than a genuine engagement with their surroundings.
7. Wharton employs travel in the novel as a motif through which the reader can observe the **characteristics** and deep-seated **traditions** of **families** from Old New York society.
8. Travel is a means through which Wharton can elucidate the nature of Newland as more interested in **artifice** rather than **reality**.

Links

I am not going to do close analysis of all of these quotes for you – you can appreciate this language for yourself, please. But these are the links that should be cropping up in your mind if you're asked about travel. Think about how you would link these to the passage, given the topic sentences that you could have created from the passage analysis.

"Mingotts and Mansons and all their clan, who cared about eating and clothes and money, and the Archer-Newland-van-der-Luyden tribe, who were devoted to travel, horticulture and the best fiction, and looked down on the grosser forms of pleasure." *This indicates the importance of family heritage in the novel, and it's linked to travel. You will want to appreciate the tone evoked by the images of a 'clan' and a tribe'.*

"Mrs. and Miss Archer were both great lovers of scenery. It was what they principally sought and admired on their occasional travels abroad; considering architecture and painting as subjects for men, and chiefly for learned persons who read Ruskin." *Again, Archer's interest in travel has been passed down by the family tradition.*

"As her mother had been a Rushworth, and her last unhappy marriage had linked her to one of the crazy Chiverses, New York looked indulgently on her eccentricities; but when she returned with her little orphaned niece, whose parents had been popular in spite of their regrettable taste for travel, people thought it a pity that the pretty child should be in such hands." *This gives insight into how a character's travel preferences can have bearings on their personality, according to society members.*

"Newland Archer prided himself on his knowledge of Italian art. His boyhood had been saturated with Ruskin, and he had read all the latest books: John Addington Symonds, Vernon Lee's "Euphorion," the essays of P. G. Hamerton, and a wonderful new volume called "The Renaissance" by Walter Pater. He talked easily of Botticelli, and spoke of Fra Angelico with a faint condescension. But these pictures bewildered him, for they were like nothing that he was accustomed to look at (and therefore able to see) when he travelled in Italy; and perhaps, also, his powers of observation were impaired by the oddness of finding himself in this strange empty house, where apparently no one expected him." *This gives you context about Newland's interest in Italy and art.*

"Archer would have liked to travel, to put off the housing question; but, though the Wellands approved of an extended European honeymoon (perhaps even a winter in Egypt), they were firm as to the need of a house for the returning couple." *Perhaps this is the link you need to discuss the comment that May makes in the passage that Newland has to be in New York. This is to do with duty and convention.*

"What if, when he had bidden May Welland to open hers, they could only look out blankly at blankness?

"We might be much better off. We might be altogether together--we might travel."

Her face lit up. "That would be lovely," she owned: she would love to travel. But her mother would not understand their wanting to do things so differently.

"As if the mere 'differently' didn't account for it!" the wooer insisted.

"Newland! You're so original!" she exulted.

His heart sank, for he saw that he was saying all the things that young men in the same situation were expected to say, and that she was making the answers that instinct and tradition taught her to make--even to the point of calling him original.

"Original! We're all as like each other as those dolls cut out of the same folded paper. We're like patterns stencilled on a wall. Can't you and I strike out for ourselves, May?"

He had stopped and faced her in the excitement of their discussion, and her eyes rested on him with a bright unclouded admiration.

"Mercy--shall we elope?" she laughed. "If you would--"

"You DO love me, Newland! I'm so happy." "But then--why not be happier?"

"We can't behave like people in novels, though, can we?"

"Why not--why not--why not?"

This is clearly an important passage. It helps establish the characters' differing attitudes towards travel.

"In obedience to a long-established habit, the Wellands had left the previous week for St. Augustine, where, out of regard for the supposed susceptibility of Mr. Welland's bronchial tubes, they always spent the latter part of the winter. Mr. Welland was a mild and silent man, with no opinions but with many habits. With these habits none might interfere; and one of them demanded that his wife and daughter should always go with him on his annual journey to the south. To preserve an unbroken domesticity was essential to his peace of mind; he would not have known where his hair-brushes were, or how to provide stamps for his letters, if Mrs. Welland had not been there to tell him.

As all the members of the family adored each other, and as Mr. Welland was the central object of their idolatry, it never occurred to his wife and May to let him go to St. Augustine alone; and his sons, who were both in the law, and could not leave New York during the winter, always joined him for Easter and travelled back with him." *Travel serves a practical role for the Wellands – to avoid sickness. Not for exploration etc. Travel as family duty.*

"It made Archer shiver to think that it might be spreading over him too. He had, to be sure, other tastes and interests; he spent his vacations in European travel, cultivated the "clever people" May spoke of, and generally tried to "keep up," as he had somewhat wistfully put it to Madame Olenska. But once he was married, what would become of this narrow margin of life in which his real experiences were lived?" *Newland considers travel as the portion of his life that is "real", and is concerned that this reality will disappear in marriage.*

"Such qualities were scarcely of the kind to enliven foreign travel, though they made her so easy and pleasant a companion; but he saw at once how they would fall into place in their proper setting. He had no fear of being oppressed by them, for his artistic and intellectual life would go on, as it always had, outside the domestic circle; and within it there would be nothing small and stifling--coming back to his wife would never be like entering a stuffy room after a tramp in the open." *Newland considers May's character. Again, this is Newland's assessment of May.*

"Archer too would have preferred to escape their friends' hospitality: in conformity with the family tradition he had always travelled as a sight-seer and looker-on, affecting a haughty unconsciousness of the presence of his fellow-beings." *This relates to the idea of watching, artifice, not engaging.*

"It was not May's fault, poor dear. If, now and then, during their travels, they had fallen slightly out of step, harmony had been restored by their return to the conditions she was used to." *May's discomfort outside of ONY.*

"No one in the Mingott set could understand why Amy Sillerton had submitted so tamely to the eccentricities of a husband who filled the house with long-haired men and short-haired women, and, when he travelled, took her to explore tombs in Yucatan instead of going to Paris or Italy." *Travel is one lens through which the reader can understand which members of the society are considered odd or eccentric. This is about Emerson and Amy Sillerton.*

"The young man stood looking about him with the dazed air of the foreigner flung upon the harsh mercies of American travel; then he advanced toward Archer, lifted his hat, and said in English:

"Surely, Monsieur, we met in London?" *The division between America and Europe is highlighted, with M. Rivière as disoriented in America as Newland had been in Europe.*

"In that train he intended to join her, and travel with her to Washington, or as much farther as she was willing to go. His own fancy inclined to Japan. At any rate she would understand at once that, wherever she went, he was going. He meant to leave a note for May that should cut off any other alternative." *Travel promises, but does not deliver, freedom to Newland.*

"There was no reason why he should not seize it, except the profound one that he had lost the habit of travel. May had disliked to move except for valid reasons, such as taking the children to the sea or in the mountains: she could imagine no other motive for leaving the house in Thirty-ninth Street or their comfortable quarters at the Wellands' in Newport. After Dallas had taken his degree she had thought it her duty to travel for six months; and the whole family had made the old-fashioned tour through England, Switzerland and Italy. Their time being limited (no one knew why) they had omitted France." *Travel linked to duty and convention. Newland, 26 years on, has come round to May's way of thinking. This provides a contrast to the passage and Newland's thoughts about May at the beginning of their relationship.*

"Since her death, nearly two years before, there had been no reason for his continuing in the same routine. His children had urged him to travel: Mary Chivers had felt sure it would do him good to go abroad and "see the galleries." The very mysteriousness of such a cure made her the more confident of its efficacy. But Archer had found himself held fast by habit, by memories, by a sudden startled shrinking from new things." *Again, Newland comes to see travel as non-essential, he is more aligned with his wife now, rather than his children, ironically, since he had their view previously.*

Close Reading of the Passage

Bold text = meaningful

Red = very meaningful (check the online version if you're looking at a print version)

"It's all very well for you, Newland; you **know** them. But I shall feel so **shy among a lot of people I've never met**. And what shall I wear?"

Newland **leaned back** in his chair and **smiled** at her. She

looked **handsomer** and more **Diana-like** than ever. The **moist** English air seemed to have **deepened** the **bloom** of her **cheeks** and **softened** the **slight hardness** of her **virginal features**; or else it was simply the inner **glow** of **happiness**, shining through like a **light** under **ice**.

Italicisation of 'know', comes across as a juvenile emphasis, reinforced by her 'shy[ness]' amongst strangers. Newland moves away from May.

The *juxtaposition* of May's *characteristics* remind the reader of Newland's inability to recognise her strength, despite the physical manifestations of this. When you quote the 'diana' *metaphor*, make sure you explain it. Many of you quote it and assume the examiner knows about the discussions you've had with me in class – the examiner doesn't know what you did in class! Demonstrate that you understand the *metaphor*.

"Wear, dearest? **I thought** a trunkful of things had come from Paris last week."

'Thought' *connotes* uncertainty, lack of awareness.

"Yes, of course. I meant to say that I shan't know **which** to wear." She **pouted** a little. "I've never dined out in London; and I don't want to be **ridiculous**."

Pouting – childish.

Irony – she IS being ridiculous. Wharton's comment.

He **tried** to enter into her perplexity. "But **don't** Englishwomen dress just like everybody else in the evening?"

Again, Newland '[tries]' and asks a **question** – he too is tentative and unsure in the foreign environment. **Ironic** considering his condemnation of his wife's ignorance.

"Newland! How can you ask such **funny questions**? When **they** go to the theatre in **old** ball-dresses and **bare** heads."

May's **tone** is condescending, dismissive here.

"Well, perhaps they wear new ball-dresses at home; but at any rate Mrs. Carfry and Miss Harle won't. They'll wear caps like my mother's—and shawls; very soft shawls."

"Yes; but how will the other women be dressed?" "Not as well as you, dear," he rejoined, **wondering** what had suddenly developed

'Wondering' – unsure, disoriented. Travel is not panning out how Newland envisaged. It introduces problems in their relationship.

in her **Janey's morbid** interest in clothes.

'Morbid' **connotes** a gloomy, deathly interest in this subject. It is not an enjoyable hobby, it becomes grim.

She **pushed back her chair with a sigh**. "That's dear of you, Newland; but it **doesn't help** me much."

Now May moves away from Newland. She sighs and informs Newland that he isn't helpful – May takes the upper hand in the relationship.

He had an inspiration. "Why not wear your wedding- dress? That can't be wrong, can it?"

More **questions** – more lack of knowledge in a foreign environment.

"Oh, dearest! If I only had it here! But it's gone to Paris to be made over for next winter, and Worth hasn't sent it back."

"Oh, well—" said Archer, getting up. "Look here—the **fog's lifting**. If we made a dash for the National Gallery we might manage

This is an **image**! Perhaps even a **metaphor**. Fog is lifting! Things are becoming clearer for Newland, which for him means the ability to look at art. It is interesting that looking at artifice offers clarity for Newland where the conventions of fashion etc. do not. Note that this is a **statement** rather than a question.

to catch a glimpse of the **pictures**."

Artifice – Newland would rather look at pictures than reality. **Motif**.

They are now married – May has lost her identity.

The **Newland Archers** were on their way home, after a **three months'** wedding-tour which May, in writing to her girl friends, **vaguely summarised as**

"blissful."

They had not gone to the Italian Lakes: on reflection, **Archer had not been able to picture his wife in that particular setting.**

Her own inclination (after a month with the Paris dressmakers) **was for mountaineering in July and swimming in August.** This plan they **punctually fulfilled**, spending **July** at Interlaken and Grindelwald, and **August** at a little place called Etretat, on the Normandy coast, which some one had recommended as quaint and quiet. Once or twice, in the mountains,

Archer had pointed southward and said: "There's Italy"; and May, her feet in a **gentian-bed**, had **smiled cheerfully, and replied: "It would be lovely to go**

there next winter, if only you didn't have to be in New York."

But in reality travelling interested her even less than he had expected. She regarded it (once her clothes were ordered) as merely an enlarged opportunity for walking, riding, swimming, and trying her hand at the **fascinating new game of lawn tennis**; and when they finally got back to London (where they

were to spend a fortnight while he ordered *his* clothes) she no longer concealed the eagerness with which she looked forward to sailing.

Such a long holiday can only be 'vaguely' described. The details are not appreciated or of interest. This is a **stylistic** choice by Wharton and it also indicates Newland's interest (or lack of interest in May) since we see through his experiences.

Inverted commas – suggests that this may not really be blissful. **Irony, tone.**

Picture his wife – again he imagines a scenario, rather than making it a reality. Think: why would May not enjoy the Italian lakes if she can enjoy the Swiss mountains? This is **NEWLAND'S VIEW.**

The sense of inflexible plans comes through here.

Language related to time and place, relayed without elaboration or emotion.

May is standing in flowers – gentians – perhaps indicating that she is rooted and also reinforcing the **image** of her delicacy. Flowers are **symbols.**

It seems non-negotiable that Newland must be in New York. This is **theme** of the rigidity of society and/or family duty.

This comment is infused with **Newland's view.** Try not to take it completely at face value. Indeed, May tries the "fascinating new" sport of tennis. Whether you think this is Wharton being sarcastic or Newland being unaware of his wife's capabilities, there is something to say about it.

Newland also spends two weeks ordering his clothes – **italicised** for emphasis and irony. He acts in the same way as May, despite patronising her.

In London nothing interested her but the **theatres and the shops**; and she found the theatres less exciting than the Paris *cafés chantants* where, under the **blossoming horse-chestnuts** of the

Champs Elysées, she had had the **novel** experience of **looking down** from the restaurant terrace on an **audience** of "cocottes," and

having her **husband interpret** to her as much of the songs as he **thought suitable for bridal ears**.

Indeed, May is now interested in theatres and shops, to add to the sports and outdoor activities. What else is she supposed to be interested in? You can argue that Newland lacks the awareness of his wife's diverse range of interests, all the while showing little interest in anything himself. This is the **narrative perspective**.

The notion of performance, watching, artifice, and condescension comes through again here. This is a **motif** in the novel.

Newland's role as proprietor, possessor of May, controlling her knowledge... but we know this doesn't play out like this in the end, so add your contextual knowledge of the novel! This relates to the **theme** of gender politics.

Chapter 20

Section C

4. (a) "I was afraid maybe..." (Act 2) How far do you agree that Arthur Miller presents fear as the catalyst for tragedy in *All My Sons*?

As advised throughout Term 3 when we were revising, it is easier to agree with this type of question. It is quicker in a practical sense under timed conditions, and it will make sure you stay on topic. Make no mistake, the examiner does want you to talk about fear – which is why s/he uses the term “fear” in the question. They will not put themes/concepts etc. in the question if they do not exist in the text. What they are doing is challenging you to demonstrate that you can argue that it’s all about fear – which it is possible to do, quite easily. Thus, if you disagree with the question you are making your task immediately more difficult because you’re going to be tempted to talk about anything else aside from fear! Before you know it, you’ve written an off-topic essay. That is not to say it is impossible to disagree, or provide some caveats and counterarguments; it is possible if you are very careful. A couple of people managed to provide some dissent to the question without losing the thread of the question terminology. You’ll see examples later. However, the best strategy is to focus on the key terms of the question – **fear** contributing to **tragedy** – and analyse the literary features to show how this effect is created in various ways. Here’s how...

How do you demonstrate that fear is a catalyst for tragedy? Well, you need to figure out what characters’ fears are first and then how they behave as a result of their fears. The characteristics and behaviour you will select will be those which contribute to various tragedies. You will also need to be clear about what the tragedies are. (Many people just write “the tragedy”. There is more than one tragedy in *All My Sons*. Don’t talk about *THE* tragedy implicitly.)

The characters’ fears:

Joe – is afraid of losing his family, his business and/or money (or perhaps paraphrased as a fear of emasculation).

Mother – is afraid losing her family.

Ann – is afraid of being alone.

Chris – is afraid of losing his father.

Sue – is afraid of losing her husband and of losing her material comfort.

Once you boil it down to this, it should be very easy to see how fear creates tragedy. What do the characters do because they are afraid of these things?

The characterisation and actions:

Joe – prioritises his business at all costs, thus commits a crime, and then covers up a crime.

Mother – insists that Larry is alive, which involves complicity in Joe’s crime, believing in the supernatural, and engaging in domineering behaviour at the expense of relations with her other son, Chris, and his prospective wife, Ann.

Ann – pursues a relationship with Chris intently, to the extent of breaking Mother’s heart with the letter.

Chris – refuses to believe his father may have been guilty even though he “suspected”.

Sue – treats her husband poorly, and with jealousy, restricting him from following his dreams and forcing him to earn dishonest money.

Considering these actions, I’m sure you can now figure out which of the tragedies below are effected as a cause of these fears...

The tragedies:

The death of 21 pilots

The suicide of Larry
The unjust incarceration of Steve
The unsuccessful adulthood of George
The suicide of Joe
The sorrow of Mother
The loss of honesty, love and a socially responsible society – especially related to Jim, Chris and George
(Is this list of tragedies enough to convince you that the play is tragic?)

Of course, you don't need to cover all of these aspects. Three paragraphs will suffice. I would probably pick: the fear of losing financial stability, the fear of losing one's family and the fear of being alone as the easiest route to completing the essay. That allows you to cover Mother and Joe, who are the causes of the most violent tragedies, and then cover Ann and/or Sue to cover the loneliness/insecurity aspect (it could be linked to gender roles at that point).

Please note that these are fundamental ideas that relate to humankind – I'm sure many of you have the same fears today. That is why the play is so affecting, and partly why it can be considered realist. Appreciate the humanity of the text. You may consider that Miller is empathizing with some of these fears and therefore not entirely condemning the individuals for their actions, but instead criticizing society for creating the conditions in which these fears can manifest. This is also why the influence of Greek tragedy becomes relevant. Joe is not evil; he is a tragic hero who has a fatal flaw that causes his inevitable demise. Be sensitive to the literary presentation and context.

There is no need to overcomplicate the question with a discussion of semantics about "catalysts" versus "root causes" or phrases like "fear leads to another layer of guilt and then it is guilt which is the real catalyst for tragedy." It's not a Christopher Nolan movie. Keep it simple. What are people afraid of? Poverty, loneliness, death. When people are afraid, they do things they wouldn't do otherwise. Tragedy ensues. Easy.

Quotes:

You shouldn't need me to do this for you, but here are some fundamental quotes about fear, just in case you didn't believe me that it's a prominent theme of the play. You now need to think through these and figure out to which paragraphs they could link.

Sue, Jim's wife, enters. She is rounding forty, an overweight woman who **fears** it.

Chris: He's welcome here. You've got nothing to **fear** from George.

Mother (a little **fearfully**) I mean if you told him that you want to pay for what you did.

Ann: (with pity and **fear**) Kate, please, please...

If I could have gone in that day I'd a told him... Junk 'em Steve, we can afford it. But alone he was **afraid**. But I know he meant no harm. He believed they'd hold up a hundred percent. That's a mistake, but it ain't murder.

Chris: Nobody's **afraid** of him here. Cut that out!

He speaks quietly, as though **afraid** to find himself screaming. An instant's hesitation and Chris steps up to him, hand extended, smiling.

George: Why, **afraid** you'll forget him?

Ann: (**afraid**) Of course I know.

George: (surging back at him) I'm not through now! (Back to Ann) Dad was **afraid**. He wanted Joe there if he was going to do it. But Joe can't come down... He's sick. Sick! He suddenly gets the flu! Suddenly! But he promised to take responsibility.

I'll settle it. Do you want to settle it, or are you **afraid** to?

George: Let me go up and talk to your father. In ten minutes you'll have the answer. Or are you **afraid** of the answer?

Chris: I'm not **afraid** of the answer. I know the answer. But my mother isn't well and I don't want a fight here now.

Keller: (**afraid** of him, his deadly insistence) What's the matter with you? What the hell is the matter with you?

Keller: I was **afraid** maybe...

Chris: You were **afraid** maybe! God in heaven, what kind of a man are you? Kids were hanging in the air by those heads. You knew that!

Keller: For you, a business for you!

Jim: Don't be **afraid**, Kate, I know. I've always known.

Mother: How?

Jim: It occurred to me a long time ago.

Mother: I don't know. I'm beginning to think we don't really know him. They say in the war he was such a killer. Here he was always **afraid** of mice. I don't know him. I don't know what he'll do.

Keller: Goddam, If Larry was alive he wouldn't act like this.

Chris: I don't want you to **worry** about it.

Chris: (noncommittally) Don't **worry** about Annie.

Chris: Absolutely, don't **worry** about it.

Sue: I'll give her one of everything. (on porch) Don't **worry** about Kate...

Mother: I'm waiting for Chris. Don't **worry** about me, Jim, I'm perfectly all right.

Ann: Can't **scare** me.

4. (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to Miller's presentation of women and domesticity here and elsewhere in the play.

When answering the question you must deal with both women and domesticity. In the passage, what is it about Mother (the only woman in this passage) that is related to domesticity? And what does this mean for the play? How are women in the domestic setting used by Miller to create meaning?

You also need to make links to elsewhere in the play and other women so that you can prove that Miller's points are about *women* and so that your essay is not about *Mother*. Sue, Ann and Lydia all provide useful examples related to domesticity that would have helped you.

Sue – takes herbs from the Keller's garden during her first appearance, grounding her in domesticity. She persistently discusses money, highlighting her concern to safeguard the household. She has previously – before the play's action – forced her husband to compromise on his dream, extinguishing the star of his honesty, in order to pursue a stable family life with material comfort. She has the power to make Jim retreat to the domestic space, even when she's not on stage.

Ann – she wants to be a wife. She does not have a role in the traditional household currently. She buys her clothes instead of making them. She is not seen engaging in domestic work. What she does do is place Mother's cooking items under her seat – relegating the importance of domestic work, and indicating a dominance over Mother, which will play into the letter later on. Crucially, Ann's power comes from outside the domestic setting, and it is this external truth that overrides the narratives of the Keller household (Miller's point on societal responsibility). You could make a generational link here.

Lydia – she is the archetypal (perhaps stereotypical if you want to criticise Miller?) domestic woman. She is married with children. She makes her own clothes. She has material goods, which she cannot operate. You could make a point here about those affected or less affected by the war. She is in Ann's generation but her circumstances are different. She seems content with her lot. She, like Sue, has the ability to command her husband to retreat to the domestic space, without being present on stage.

Possible (not exhaustive) paragraph ideas:

1. By establishing domestic space as a female domain, Miller attempts to authentic the mise-en-scène of post-war American life.
2. Miller presents women to dominate the domestic space in order to enforce their own narrative on their families.
3. Miller presents a disparity between the women of different generations and the way in which they treat the notion of domesticity.
4. Miller uses the notion of past traumas to create a dichotomy between women in the play, specifically leading to conflicting motivations between Mother and Ann.
5. The safeguarding of domestic space by women in the play is an action employed by Miller to elucidate the pervasive fear of loss in the post-war community. (You see how the two questions can help each other if you're thinking lucidly.)
6. Miller creates a realist domestic setting in which women are seen to take control.
7. Having established such middle class domestic comfort, such a setting serves to dramatise and add poignancy to the tragedy that ensues when audiences observe that the women cannot restrict the family narrative to domestic concerns.

Close Reading of the Passage

Bold text = meaningful

Red = very meaningful (check the online version if you're looking at a print version)

[MOTHER **appears on porch**. She is in her early **fifties**, a woman of **uncontrolled inspirations** and an **overwhelming** capacity for love.]

MOTHER: Joe?

CHRIS: [**going toward porch**] Hello, Mom.

MOTHER: [*indicating house behind her*. To KELLER] Did you **take** a bag from under the sink?

KELLER: Yeah, I put it in the pail.

MOTHER: **Well, get it out of the pail. That's my potatoes.** [CHRIS *bursts out laughing. Goes up into alley.*]

KELLER: [*laughing*] I thought it was garbage.

MOTHER: **Will you do me a favor, Joe? Don't be helpful.**

KELLER: I can **afford** another bag of potatoes.

MOTHER: Minnie scoured that pail in boiling water last night. It's cleaner than your teeth.

KELLER: And I don't understand why, after **I worked forty years** and I got a maid, why I have to take out the garbage.

MOTHER: If you would make up your mind that every back in the kitchen isn't full of garbage you wouldn't be throwing out my vegetables. **Last time it was the onions.** [CHRIS *comes on, hands her bag.*]

KELLER: **I don't like garbage in the house.**

MOTHER: Then **don't eat**. [*She goes into the kitchen with bag*]

CHRIS: **That settles you for today.**

KELLER: Yeah, I'm in **last place again**. I don't know, once upon a time I used to think that when I got **money** again I would have a **maid** and **my wife** would take it easy. Now I got money, and I got a **maid**, and my **wife** is **workin'** for the maid. [*He sits in one of the chairs* MOTHER *comes out on last line. She carries a pot of string beans.*]

MOTHER: It's her day off, what are you crabbing about?

CHRIS: [to MOTHER] Isn't Annie finished eating?

MOTHER: [*looking around preoccupiedly at yard*] She'll be right out. [*Moves*] That wind did some job on this place. [*Of the tree*] So much for that, **thank God**.

KELLER: [*indicating chair beside him*] Sit down, take it easy.

MOTHER: [*pressing her hand to top of her head*] I've got such a **funny pain** on the top of my head.

CHRIS: Can I get you an **aspirin**?

The image of 'appearing' is almost ethereal. And her **centrality** on the stage indicates her significance to this household. Characters are drawn 'toward' her, indicating her dominance.

Staging. Her **tone** is curt and her **speech** direct, instructional. Chris helps her retrieve the potatoes, signifying his deference to her.

Stage directions.

Keller's **dialogue** is steeped in monetary terminology.

Metaphor. The subtext is not about food.

Keller is 'again' in 'last place', **metaphorically**, connoting Mother's consistent dominance in the house. Again, Keller's **language** is related to finance, while Mother continues to do domestic work. Chris changes the subject. Indicating his aversion to **conflict**. Mother's 'preoccupied' demeanour hints at the **subtext** of emotional burden on her regarding her lost son and Joe's crime.

She gives her thank[s] to a supernatural entity, **characterising** her faith in the intangible. Mother's insecurities manifest **physically** in pain.

MOTHER: *[picks a few petals off ground, stands there smelling them in her hand, then sprinkles them over plants.]*
No more roses. It's so funny... **everything decides** to happen at the same time. This month is his **birthday**, his **tree** blows down, Annie comes. Everything that happened seems to be coming back. I was just down the **cellar**, and what do I stumble over? His **baseball glove**. I haven't seen it in a century.

CHRIS: Don't you think Annie looks well?

MOTHER: Fine. There's no question about it. **She's a beauty**... I still don't know what brought her here. Not that I'm not glad to see her, but...

CHRIS: I just thought we'd all like to see each other again.
[MOTHER just looks at him, nodding ever so slightly, almost as though admitting something] And I wanted to see her myself.

This is the crux of the passage. Mother's **action** is striking, as if scattering ashes, or mourning, and she talks for a long time uninterrupted about domesticity. **Language** is passive at times.. She is nostalgic and creating **symbolism** in simple domestic events. To ignore this part of the passage would be weird. Don't be weird.

Mother, as well as being 'preoccupied', 'admit[s]' something here – there is a **subtext** beneath the conversation. The domestic **conflict** between the characters hints at something much deeper.

MOTHER: *[as her nods halt, to KELLER]* The only think is I think her **nose got longer**. But I'll always love that girl. She's one that didn't jump into bed with somebody else as soon as it happened with **her fella**.

KELLER: *[as though that were impossible for Annie]* Oh, what're you...

MOTHER: Never mind. Most of them didn't wait till the **telegrams** were opened. I'm just glad she came, so you can see I'm

Mother's judgement about Ann changes once Chris confirms his interest.

Mother cannot address the presumed death directly in her speech. Her **dialogue** is **ambiguous**.

Mother **interrupts** Keller, again indicating her control of domestic subjects. Ironic, considering her 'uncontrolled' emotional character. **Stage directions**.

not completely **out of my mind**. *[Sits, and rapidly breaks string beans in the pot]*

Her 'rapid' **movements** suggest anxiety.

Act 1

Prepared by Benjamin Hathaway, August 2017.