

THE READING ROOM

BA English Literature

Jai Narain Vyas University, Jodhpur

Semester 1 | Drama | Unit 3

Course 01/ENG/MJR/101 | 2026-27 intake

Kanyadan

Vijay Tendulkar

Study notes + practice questions + quick revision

Caste, social reform and the limits of idealism. Examine the play's difficult questions about marriage, violence and autonomy.

Independent study-support draft. Academic review is pending. All questions are original practice questions, not previous-year JNVU questions.

Syllabus: university-titled institutional copy. Direct JNVU approval and intake applicability remain pending. Check the programme and source discrepancies with your department.

The entire prescribed English script was not accessed. Full-script verification remains required; no copyrighted dialogue is reproduced.

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01 / Learn

Start with the central problem

Vijay Tendulkar's *Kanyadan*, published by Oxford University Press as *Kanyadaan*, places a marriage at the meeting point of caste, gender, political belief and personal responsibility. Jyoti, a young woman from a Brahmin family committed to social reform, chooses to marry Arun Athavale, a Dalit writer. Her father Nath Devalalikar welcomes the match as an opportunity to put his opposition to caste into practice. Marriage, however, exposes tensions that public declarations of equality have not resolved.

The play is especially useful for learning how drama tests ideas through relationships. An essay can announce that society should change; a play can bring people with unequal histories into the same room and reveal what change demands of them. Tendulkar makes the family home a place where progressive language encounters fear, resentment, violence and disappointment. The audience must judge actions as well as speeches.

This guide offers an original interpretation supported by publisher information and academic research. It does not reproduce the play. Read the prescribed edition alongside it: academic review of this draft is pending, and exact stage directions, scene references and character-name spellings require edition checking.

Author, translation and context

Tendulkar's theatre

Vijay Tendulkar was a major Indian playwright whose principal literary language was Marathi. His work also extended to screenwriting, essays, journalism and social commentary. The English reader therefore encounters *Kanyadaan* through translation, rather than a play originally composed in English. Oxford University Press identifies **Gowri Ramnarayan** as its translator. The spelling of the translator's surname should follow the publisher, even where a syllabus contains a typographical variation.

Tendulkar's other plays include *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *Sakharam Binder*, *Kamala* and *Ghashiram Kotwal*. Their inclusion in his OUP collected volume establishes the breadth of his dramatic writing. For this unit, the relevant habit is to examine how a publicly respectable ideal may coexist with the exercise of power. Characters should not be reduced to moral labels before their conduct has been considered.

A contested social drama

Academic research places the Marathi play in 1983 and discusses it in relation to debates about caste, Dalit assertion and liberal reform. Caste here is a structure of inherited hierarchy and unequal treatment, not an explanation of anybody's moral worth. The term **Dalit** signifies an identity associated with resistance to caste oppression. Arun's individual conduct must never be presented as evidence about Dalit people generally.

The play has attracted sharply different responses. One important question is whether it exposes the limits of upper-caste reformism. Another is whether its portrayal of Arun risks repeating degrading stereotypes about Dalit masculinity. These questions can coexist: a work may challenge one hierarchy while remaining open to criticism for its representation of another. A strong answer recognises this tension without announcing that all critics agree.

Title and governing conflict

Kanyadaan refers to the giving of a daughter in marriage. The title connects the private relationship to a social practice in which paternal authority is central. Its significance extends beyond a wedding ritual: it asks who has the power to give, who is treated as a gift, and what happens to a daughter's independent personhood.

Jyoti makes a choice, so she is not merely a passive object. Yet Nath also invests that choice with the meaning of his political project. He sees marriage as a demonstration that caste barriers can be crossed. This creates the governing conflict: can a person's life become the instrument through which someone else proves an ideal? The title becomes disturbing because a generous intention can still place the cost of reform on a woman.

Plot: follow the movement from promise to crisis

The proposed marriage

The opening movement introduces the reform-minded Devalalika household. Jyoti announces her wish to marry Arun. Nath supports the match; Seva, Jyoti's mother, and Jayaprakash, her brother, raise objections and doubts. Arun's writing matters to Jyoti's interest in him. Intellectual sympathy and admiration therefore enter the relationship alongside the decision to marry.

Arun's encounter with the family reveals the distance between their experiences. The household has the confidence of education, public engagement and social privilege. Arun brings accounts and memories of caste humiliation, together with anger towards that privileged world. These encounters offer warning signs before the marriage. Nath nevertheless places considerable trust in the possibility of transformation.

The marriage and its consequences

The later movement reveals an abusive marriage. Arun's drinking and physical violence create distress for Jyoti and her family. The abuse continues during her pregnancy. These developments make the situation more than an abstract disagreement about caste: a woman's bodily safety and dignity are at stake.

Nath struggles with the failure of his expectations. The distinction between defending equality and excusing an individual's behaviour becomes increasingly important. A further crisis concerns Arun's autobiography: Nath is pressured into publicly supporting the writer whose private conduct he finds unacceptable. Literary achievement, public reputation and private responsibility are brought into conflict.

The ending

Jyoti remains committed to life with Arun and repudiates the comfortable assumptions of her parental household. Her confrontation with Nath makes her disappointment in the worldview she inherited unmistakable. The ending does not provide an easy reconciliation or a secure resolution of the abuse. It leaves questions about agency, belonging and the price of idealism unresolved.

Avoid saying that Jyoti obtains happiness, that Arun is definitively reformed, or that the conclusion proves inter-caste marriage cannot work. None of those claims follows from this particular dramatic situation. The plot presents these characters' damaged relationship, not a universal verdict on marriage across caste.

Characters as conflicting positions

Nath Devalalikar: belief and paternal power

Nath is a politician and social reformer whose opposition to caste informs family life. His enthusiasm for the marriage gives him an attractive willingness to act on principle. Yet he tends to treat Arun as someone to be transformed and Jyoti as the person through whom transformation will occur. His confidence can obscure both Arun's independence and Jyoti's vulnerability.

An effective character study asks what Nath prioritises when belief clashes with evidence. He is neither merely a hypocrite nor an uncomplicated hero. His predicament illustrates how sincere idealism can become paternalistic: the reformer assumes that he knows another person's needs and the proper direction of that person's development.

Jyoti: choice, suffering and dissent

Jyoti is simultaneously a participant in the marriage and the person who bears its gravest consequences. Her interest in Arun's writing and experience is understandable, but sympathy does not guarantee knowledge of a partner. Her father's principles help shape the moral framework within which she chooses.

Her final rejection of that framework gives her an assertive voice. Nevertheless, remaining within an abusive relationship makes her agency difficult to interpret. Independence from a father and freedom from a husband's violence are different matters. A feminist reading must preserve that distinction and avoid praising endurance as a woman's duty.

Arun Athavale: historical injury and responsibility

Arun is a Dalit poet and autobiographical writer. His literary ability and knowledge of oppression complicate the family's assumptions about culture and refinement. However, his violence towards Jyoti cannot be erased by either his social history or his artistic talent.

Read Arun through the distinction between explanation and justification. Experiences of humiliation may help explain anger; they do not justify harming another person. Equally, condemning his abuse does not invalidate the history of caste oppression. A responsible analysis

can maintain both judgements without making a community answerable for a fictional individual's conduct.

Seva and Jayaprakash: voices of doubt

Seva brings a mother's concern and a social activist's experience to the family discussion. Her questions about compatibility and everyday life challenge Nath's optimism. Some of her responses can also be examined for the persistence of caste and class assumptions within progressive language. Concern for Jyoti and prejudice need careful differentiation.

Jayaprakash, Jyoti's brother, questions the family's confident idealism. He broadens the argument about suffering and the possibility that someone subjected to oppression may still exercise power unjustly. His function is partly that of a **foil**: a contrasting voice that helps the audience recognise what Nath overlooks.

Major themes and useful distinctions

Caste and the limits of symbolic reform

The marriage crosses an inherited social boundary. Nath reads it as a powerful sign of change. The subsequent crisis asks whether a symbolic act can by itself remove inequality, humiliation and patterns of domination. The productive question is how reform becomes responsible to actual lives. An answer should neither dismiss equality nor mistake a declaration of equality for its achievement.

Gender and the distribution of sacrifice

Jyoti's body and future become the ground on which competing convictions are tested. Nath attaches public significance to her marriage; Arun's anger enters the intimate relationship as violence. She is caught between different exercises of male authority. This supports an analysis of patriarchy even though the two men occupy unequal caste positions.

Patriarchy means arrangements of power that privilege male authority. It does not require every man to act identically. In this play, ask whose argument receives attention and whose suffering supplies its cost. That question turns the theme into analysis rather than a general statement that society is unfair.

Art and ethical judgement

Arun's writing creates a troubling separation between literary recognition and domestic conduct. Can a powerful autobiography deserve attention while its author remains responsible for abuse? The play makes an audience consider both judgements. Nath's public support intensifies the conflict because the same person must speak as a reformer, a literary admirer and a father.

Agency and disillusionment

Agency is the capacity to act and make choices within constraints. Jyoti's choice matters, but choice does not remove those constraints. **Disillusionment** is the loss of an earlier confidence, here visible in the damage to Nath's expectations and Jyoti's inherited beliefs. It need not mean that every ideal is worthless. It can demand a more careful relationship between moral purpose and practical responsibility.

How the drama works on stage

Structure, dialogue and setting

Research describes *Kanyadaan* as a two-act play. Its broad movement is from the anticipation of marriage to the consequences of marriage. This structure makes later experience answer earlier confidence. For detailed scene numbering, use the prescribed copy rather than an online summary.

The household setting brings family affection and political argument into immediate contact. Conversation is dramatic action: questions challenge authority, explanations seek consent, and accusations change relationships. The audience learns by listening to competing positions rather than receiving a single reliable narrator's explanation.

Irony and changing relationships

Situational irony arises when consequences conflict with expectations: an act imagined as liberation becomes entangled with domination. The audience can also notice warnings that Nath's optimism discounts, creating ironic distance. **Dramatic irony**, more specifically, depends on audience knowledge that a character lacks. Identify the relevant knowledge gap before applying that term to a particular exchange; disagreement with a character's judgement alone does not establish it.

The contrasting roles of public speaker, father, daughter, husband and writer produce pressure without requiring a large cast or spectacular settings. Examine changes in tone, control of conversation and the contrast between a stated principle and a visible consequence. Do not invent lighting instructions or gestures; quote and explain them only after checking the actual edition.

Build an exam answer from an argument

Begin with a claim that answers the question. For example: *The play tests social idealism by showing how a daughter's marriage becomes both a personal commitment and her father's experiment in reform.* Develop three or four connected points, each supported by a verified incident. Explain the incident's implication instead of retelling the entire plot.

For a character question, connect motive, action, contradiction and consequence. For a theme question, compare at least two characters. For a dramatic-technique question, explain how

structure or dialogue changes audience understanding. End by returning to the question and acknowledging a genuine unresolved tension where relevant.

This draft supplies no invented dialogue or previous-year questions. The practice bank contains original questions. Before an examination, check spellings and any required quotation against the prescribed translation, and distinguish a character's caste prejudice from the play's debated representation and your own judgement.

02 / Prepare

Original practice questions. MCQs are for understanding and revision; the site does not claim they mirror JNVU's examination format. Long answers include two complete models and three explicitly labelled essay outlines.

Multiple-choice questions

1. In which language was *Kanyadaan* originally written?

- A. English
- B. Marathi
- C. Hindi
- D. Tamil

Answer: B. Marathi. The English text is a translation of Tendulkar's Marathi play; its inclusion in an English course does not make English its original language.

2. Who translated *Kanyadaan* into English for the OUP edition?

- A. Priya Adarkar
- B. Shanta Gokhale
- C. Gowri Ramnarayan
- D. Eleanor Zelliot

Answer: C. Gowri Ramnarayan. Oxford University Press identifies her as the translator. Follow the publisher's spelling when writing her name.

3. Which relationship forms the central dramatic situation?

- A. A political rivalry between brothers
- B. A marriage between Jyoti and Arun
- C. A conflict between a teacher and pupil
- D. A dispute over a theatre company

Answer: B. Jyoti's marriage to Arun is the central situation. It brings caste, gender, reformist belief and personal responsibility into immediate conflict.

4. Why does Nath particularly welcome Jyoti's marriage?

- A. It promises financial security

- B. It will end his political career
- C. It gives him an opportunity to oppose caste in practice
- D. It allows the family to abandon public life

Answer: C. Nath sees the inter-caste marriage as a practical expression of his anti-caste beliefs. The drama later tests whether his symbolic expectation adequately recognises the people involved.

5. Which description best identifies Arun's literary activity?

- A. Historian and schoolteacher
- B. Poet and autobiographical writer
- C. Newspaper editor only
- D. Translator of ancient epics

Answer: B. Arun writes poetry and autobiography. His literary achievement complicates the family's encounter with him and raises questions about art and an author's private conduct.

6. Who is Jayaprakash?

- A. Jyoti's brother
- B. Arun's father
- C. Nath's political opponent
- D. Seva's employer

Answer: A. Jayaprakash is Jyoti's brother. His questioning offers a countervoice to Nath's confidence and helps develop the debate over power and suffering.

7. Which meaning best introduces the significance of the title?

- A. The birth of a son
- B. The giving of a daughter in marriage
- C. The election of a leader
- D. The publication of an autobiography

Answer: B. The giving of a daughter in marriage. The title invites analysis of paternal authority, Jyoti's choice and the cost of making marriage serve a social ideal.

8. Which statement best distinguishes explanation from justification in a reading of Arun?

- A. Past oppression makes every later action acceptable

- B. Literary talent removes personal responsibility
- C. Historical injury may explain anger without making abuse acceptable
- D. Only Jyoti is accountable for the marriage

Answer: C. Historical injury may help explain Arun's anger, but it does not justify violence against Jyoti. The distinction permits attention to caste injustice and individual responsibility together.

9. What does paternalism mean in analysing Nath?

- A. Helping while assuming the right to direct another person's development
- B. Refusing to take any interest in others
- C. Following a daughter's every instruction
- D. Writing a political autobiography

Answer: A. Paternalism involves a claimed benevolence that assumes authority over someone else's life. Nath's expectation that Jyoti can help transform Arun invites this reading.

10. What makes the autobiography episode ethically difficult for Nath?

- A. He cannot read Arun's writing
- B. He is asked to endorse a writer whose domestic conduct he condemns
- C. He has decided to become Arun's translator
- D. He is forbidden to attend public functions

Answer: B. Nath faces a conflict between public recognition of Arun's writing and knowledge of his abusive conduct. His role as Jyoti's father makes public endorsement particularly troubling.

11. Which statement best describes Jyoti's agency at the end?

- A. She is proved completely free of all domination
- B. She has no voice or decision at all
- C. She rejects parental assumptions while remaining within a troubling marriage
- D. She becomes the narrator of the entire play

Answer: C. Jyoti asserts herself against her parental household but remains with Arun. A responsible answer distinguishes this assertion from proof that she has escaped abuse.

12. Which is the most responsible conclusion about caste?

- A. Arun represents the moral character of all Dalit people
- B. The play proves all inter-caste marriages must fail

- C. A fictional individual's conduct should not be generalised to a community
- D. Caste is irrelevant to every scene

Answer: C. An individual's conduct cannot establish a community's character. Analyse the play's particular relationships and its contested representation without reproducing caste stereotypes.

13. What does the broad two-act movement make possible?

- A. Later consequences test earlier confidence
- B. All events are shown in reverse order
- C. The audience receives a reliable narrator's verdict
- D. The marriage is removed from the action

Answer: A. The movement from expectation to consequence makes the later marriage answer the earlier reformist optimism. This supports an analysis of structure and irony.

14. Which description best captures Seva's dramatic function?

- A. A silent observer without any opinion
- B. A voice of practical concern whose assumptions also need examination
- C. An authorial narrator who settles every issue
- D. Arun's literary publisher

Answer: B. Seva questions compatibility and everyday consequences. Her concern for Jyoti should be examined alongside any caste or class assumptions in her responses.

15. Which approach best answers a question on dramatic technique?

- A. List themes without mentioning their presentation
- B. Retell every incident and stop
- C. Explain how dialogue, contrast and structure shape audience understanding
- D. Invent stage directions that seem appropriate

Answer: C. Explain the effect of the dramatic form. Techniques matter because they change how the audience interprets beliefs, actions and relationships; invented stage directions cannot supply evidence.

Very-short-answer questions

1. Identify the author and translator of *Kanyadaan*.

Vijay Tendulkar wrote *Kanyadaan* in Marathi. Gowri Ramnarayan translated it into English for Oxford University Press. The English reader therefore studies a translated Indian play, and should distinguish its author from its translator.

2. What is Nath's central expectation of the marriage?

Nath expects Jyoti's marriage to Arun to make his opposition to caste visible in practice. He invests their relationship with public significance, which creates tension when protecting the ideal conflicts with responding to Jyoti's suffering.

3. Explain the title briefly.

Kanyadaan refers to giving a daughter in marriage. In the play, it raises questions about paternal authority and a daughter's personhood. Jyoti chooses Arun, yet Nath also treats the marriage as the means of testing his reformist ideal.

4. Why is Arun's writing important?

Arun's poetry and autobiography contribute to Jyoti's interest in him and to his public identity. His literary achievement creates an ethical problem when admiration for the writer encounters evidence of abusive behaviour within marriage.

5. What is a foil, and who provides a contrasting voice to Nath?

A foil is a character whose contrast reveals another character's qualities or assumptions. Jayaprakash's questioning supplies such a contrast to Nath's confidence, helping the audience recognise the limits of an optimistic account of reform.

6. Distinguish agency from complete freedom in Jyoti's case.

Agency means acting and choosing within constraints. Jyoti chooses marriage and challenges her father, but these acts do not prove freedom from her husband's violence. Her situation demonstrates that assertion and vulnerability can coexist.

7. What is paternalism in the play?

Paternalism is a form of presumed help that claims authority over another person's development. Nath's faith in transforming Arun through Jyoti's marriage can be read this way because it risks subordinating their lives to his own ideal.

8. What interpretive caution is necessary when discussing Arun?

Arun must be discussed as a fictional individual with responsibility for his actions. Neither his violence nor a character's prejudiced statement can establish a truth about Dalit people generally. Historical oppression and individual accountability need separate consideration.

9. What broad contrast organises the two-act movement?

The play moves from anticipation of marriage to its damaging consequences. Later experience tests earlier confidence, making the relationship between idealism and reality visible. This contrast helps the audience recognise irony and reassess the family's beliefs.

10. Why does the ending resist an easy conclusion?

Jyoti challenges her father's worldview while remaining with Arun. The play therefore offers neither a secure escape from abuse nor uncomplicated reconciliation. Her assertion raises continuing questions about choice, belonging and the cost of inherited ideals.

Short-answer questions

1. Explain the significance of the title Kanyadaan.

The title refers to giving a daughter in marriage and directs attention to the authority behind that act. Jyoti chooses Arun, so she cannot simply be described as a passive gift. Yet Nath gives the marriage a significance that exceeds her personal relationship: it is to demonstrate the practical strength of his opposition to caste. The title consequently asks whether a daughter's life is being used to confirm a father's political belief. Its irony emerges when an act associated with generosity becomes entangled with suffering. The marriage does cross a social boundary, but it does not automatically protect Jyoti's dignity. A strong reading connects the title with agency, paternalism and the unequal distribution of sacrifice.

2. How does Seva challenge Nath's idealism?

Seva raises questions about compatibility and the everyday consequences of the proposed marriage. These concerns challenge Nath's tendency to interpret the relationship primarily as a victory over caste boundaries. Her role introduces the difference between endorsing a social principle and knowing the individuals who must live its consequences. She therefore helps the audience test Nath's confidence. However, she should not be treated as a completely reliable spokesperson for practical wisdom. Her language and assumptions can also be examined for the persistence of caste and class distinctions within a progressive household. The character is most useful when both dimensions are retained: concern for Jyoti can be legitimate, while its expression may remain shaped by privilege.

3. Why does the play require a distinction between explanation and justification?

Arun's anger is connected to histories and experiences of caste humiliation. Ignoring that context would weaken the analysis by treating his encounter with the privileged household as socially empty. Nevertheless, acknowledging oppression does not make his violence against Jyoti acceptable. Explanation examines conditions that help us understand conduct; justification claims that conduct is right or permissible. The play makes this distinction necessary because sympathy for the oppressed can otherwise become an excuse for harm in the present. The same distinction protects analysis from the opposite error: condemning Arun's abuse cannot establish that caste oppression is unimportant or that Dalit people share his character. Individual responsibility and opposition to structural injustice can be maintained together.

4. Discuss the conflict between Arun's literary identity and private conduct.

Arun's poetry and autobiography establish a capacity for expression that attracts attention and sympathy. His writing brings caste injury into a conversation where privileged characters may otherwise imagine reform without understanding its subjects. However, his abusive behaviour creates a troubling gap between artistic achievement and ethical conduct. The autobiography episode concentrates this problem by involving Nath in public support for a writer he condemns as a husband. Appreciation of a text need not require approval of everything its author does. Yet public praise may conceal abuse when the distinction is left unstated or made under pressure. The episode therefore tests literary judgement, political loyalty and parental responsibility at the same time.

5. How does the household setting serve the drama?

The Devalalika home brings public beliefs into contact with family decisions. Nath's reformist ideals are no longer tested only through political speech; they are tested through the proposed marriage of his daughter. Within this shared space, different characters can question the same event from different positions. Seva considers practical consequences, Nath sees a social achievement, Jyoti voices a choice, and Arun introduces experiences of caste injury. Their dialogue turns the home into a site of argument over authority and responsibility. The setting also makes harm personal: the marriage's consequences affect people who know and care for one another. In an examination answer, explain these effects without inventing furniture, lighting or gestures unsupported by the prescribed text.

6. Explain the irony of Nath's reformist experiment.

Nath believes that Jyoti's marriage can turn opposition to caste into lived practice. That expectation has an admirable commitment behind it: he wants action to follow principle. The irony is that a relationship imagined as liberating becomes associated with abuse and unequal power. Nath's attempt to help can also become paternalistic when he assumes that Arun should be transformed according to his own values and that Jyoti should undertake the task. The later consequences expose the inadequacy of an ideal that overlooks a person's safety. The irony does not establish that equality is a mistaken aim. It questions the means of pursuing it and asks whether a reformer can recognise harm without sacrificing people to the reputation of an experiment.

7. Why should Jyoti's final decision be interpreted carefully?

Jyoti's final confrontation gives her a strong voice against the comfortable beliefs of her parental household. She refuses to let Nath's worldview provide an adequate account of what she has experienced. This can be read as an assertion of agency. Yet remaining with Arun does not demonstrate freedom from violence, happiness or successful reform of her husband. Independence from a father and safety within marriage are different conditions. The ending is therefore unsettling rather than a simple celebration of emancipation. A balanced reading recognises Jyoti's act of dissent while asking what choices are available to her and what their costs are. It should avoid treating endurance of abuse as proof of moral strength or a woman's duty.

8. How does dialogue help create the play's intellectual conflict?

Dialogue allows reformist confidence, practical anxiety, resentment and disappointment to confront one another directly. The audience hears competing interpretations of the marriage instead of receiving a single narrator's authoritative explanation. What a character says can then be tested against conduct and consequences. Nath's optimism becomes more vulnerable when Seva and Jayaprakash question it; Arun's accounts of oppression become ethically complicated by his treatment of Jyoti. Conversation is therefore action: questions disturb authority, consent enables decisions, and accusations alter relationships. A good answer on dialogue should explain how these exchanges change audience understanding. Exact words and stage directions must come from the prescribed edition; accurate paraphrase is preferable to a memorable but invented quotation.

Essay and long-answer questions

1. Discuss Kanyadaan as a critical examination of Nath's social idealism.

Kanyadaan examines social idealism by bringing Nath Devalalikar's beliefs into contact with the consequences of his daughter's marriage. Nath opposes caste hierarchy and welcomes Jyoti's decision to marry Arun Athavale, a Dalit writer. His response has a serious moral intention: he wants reform to enter ordinary life. The play nevertheless questions whether this intention is adequate when it makes an individual relationship carry the burden of a political demonstration.

Nath's initial enthusiasm depends on the marriage's symbolic value. The crossing of a caste boundary appears to confirm his principles. Yet the relationship involves particular people with different experiences, expectations and capacities for harm. Seva's and Jayaprakash's doubts make this difference visible. Their questions help distinguish support for equality from sufficient knowledge of a marriage. Nath's confidence risks treating a desired social outcome as if it guaranteed a safe personal relationship.

His idealism also invites a criticism of paternalism. He imagines that Arun can be changed, with Jyoti playing a central part in that transformation. This places Nath in the position of deciding what another man's development should mean and his daughter in the position of carrying it out. Benevolence therefore remains connected to authority. Arun is not simply accepted as an independent individual, while Jyoti's marriage becomes a means of confirming her father's worldview.

The abusive marriage exposes the practical cost of this arrangement. Jyoti's suffering makes the conflict inseparable from bodily safety and dignity. An interpretation centred only on Nath's disappointment would miss the person who bears the most direct harm. The ethical test is whether Nath can acknowledge violence and respond to it even when that acknowledgement damages the reputation of his experiment. Care for a principle must remain answerable to care for a person.

The episode involving public support for Arun's autobiography intensifies the contradiction. Nath encounters Arun as both a writer whose work can command admiration and a husband whose conduct he finds unacceptable. His public role and paternal responsibility pull him in different

directions. The episode exposes the danger that literary recognition and progressive solidarity may conceal harm when they are used to protect a public image.

Tendulkar develops these problems through dramatic contrast. The broad two-act movement brings the marriage's consequences after its earlier promise, so experience tests confidence. Dialogue allows other characters to challenge Nath without a narrator settling the dispute. The audience can recognise warning signs and compare his declared values with the actions those values produce. Irony emerges from the difference between intended liberation and actual domination.

Jyoti's final repudiation of her parental household makes Nath's failure more than a private disappointment. The values he taught her are themselves placed under judgement. Nevertheless, the play need not be read as proof that equality or inter-caste marriage is impossible. Its sharper question concerns the responsibility of reform: how can people oppose hierarchy without turning others into instruments of their own goodness? Nath's idealism becomes ethically inadequate when its vindication matters more than the lives through which it is tested.

2. Examine the relationship between caste and gender in Kanyadaan.

Kanyadaan brings caste and gender together through Jyoti's marriage to Arun Athavale. Their relationship crosses a caste boundary, but it does not end the unequal histories and exercises of power that shape their lives. Nath interprets the marriage as progress towards equality; Jyoti's experience shows why a symbolic act must also be judged by its consequences for the people involved.

Arun's presence unsettles the privileged Devalalikar household. His literary identity and accounts of caste injury confront a family that speaks confidently about reform. This encounter makes the distinction between supporting the oppressed and understanding their experiences important. The family's progressive self-image does not automatically remove habits of judgement formed by caste and class. Its response to Arun must therefore be examined rather than assumed to be completely egalitarian.

However, caste oppression does not explain the whole marriage. Arun's violence against Jyoti introduces an exercise of male power within the relationship. His experience of injury cannot justify inflicting injury on his wife. Explanation and justification must remain separate: the former investigates the conditions of anger, while the latter would wrongly excuse abuse. Condemning his actions also cannot support a generalisation about Dalit men. A fictional individual is neither a community's moral representative nor evidence for inherited character.

Jyoti's position reveals how gendered vulnerability can operate across caste differences. She begins with the advantages of a privileged family, but those advantages do not protect her from domestic violence. Her suffering challenges any account in which crossing a caste boundary by itself guarantees liberation. It also shows that one person's subordinate position in a social hierarchy does not make that person incapable of domination in another relationship.

Nath's role extends the gender analysis beyond Arun's conduct. He makes Jyoti's marriage carry the significance of his anti-caste beliefs and expects her participation to help realise his ideal.

This is a different form of power from physical abuse, but it can still subordinate her needs to a man's project. The title's association with giving a daughter in marriage sharpens the issue: who controls the meaning of her life, and whose convictions determine the sacrifice expected of her?

Seva's concern for Jyoti introduces a further complication. Her questions test the practical wisdom of the marriage, yet protective concern may coexist with assumptions about caste and class. The drama therefore avoids a simple division between an enlightened family and an entirely external problem. It requires attention to the forms of authority and prejudice within the reformist home itself.

The ending keeps these tensions open. Jyoti challenges her father's worldview while remaining with Arun, so her agency cannot be equated with complete emancipation. She speaks and chooses, but her choice remains troubling because independence from parental authority does not secure freedom from marital violence. The play's significance lies in making caste equality and women's dignity simultaneous ethical demands. A careful reading refuses to trade one for the other and remains alert to the debated risks of stereotyping in the play's representation of Arun.

3. Discuss Jyoti as a character and evaluate the significance of her final confrontation.

Answer outline - develop into connected analytical paragraphs.

1. Establish the argument. Jyoti is central because the play's ideas acquire practical consequences through her marriage. Analyse her as a person who chooses, suffers and speaks, rather than merely the proof of Nath's success or failure. An effective thesis distinguishes the existence of agency from complete freedom.
2. Explain her initial position. She belongs to a reform-minded Brahmin household and is influenced by its values. Her interest in Arun includes a response to his writing and experience. Discuss how intellectual sympathy can motivate a choice without guaranteeing full knowledge of another person.
3. Examine paternal influence. Nath encourages the marriage as an expression of anti-caste reform. This support allows Jyoti's choice, but also gives it a public meaning she must carry. Show how apparent freedom can coexist with the expectation that she will vindicate someone else's ideal.
4. Discuss the marriage's consequences. Arun's abuse makes safety and dignity central. Avoid describing Jyoti's suffering as a necessary sacrifice for social progress. The ethical question is whether any cause can legitimately require that price from an individual.
5. Analyse the final confrontation. Jyoti repudiates the assumptions of her parental home while remaining with Arun. Her dissent gives her voice and challenges Nath's authority. Yet it does not establish that the marriage becomes safe or happy.
6. Address competing interpretations. Her decision can be read as assertion, estrangement, disillusionment or a troubling mixture of these. Explain which reading your evidence supports. Do not claim that all critics agree or that persistence within abuse is automatically liberation.

7. Conclude with the dramatic effect. The unresolved situation forces the audience to hold together choice and constraint. Jyoti's final position reveals the inadequacy of judging emancipation through a single act of defiance.

4. Discuss the relationship between art, public reputation and ethical responsibility in Kanyadaan.

Answer outline - develop into connected analytical paragraphs.

1. Frame the problem. Arun's poetry and autobiography establish literary ability, but his private conduct creates an ethical contradiction. Argue that the play makes admiration for art and judgement of an artist interact without allowing either to erase the other.
2. Explain writing's role in the relationship. Jyoti's interest in Arun includes her response to his writing. Literature offers access to experience beyond her privileged household. Ask how sympathy produced by reading differs from knowledge obtained through living with someone.
3. Consider social significance. Arun's autobiographical identity gives caste injury a public voice. Acknowledging that voice matters because the reformist family cannot claim complete understanding through its own benevolent intentions. Avoid dismissing the writing merely because its author commits abuse.
4. Bring in the marriage. Literary talent does not remove Arun's responsibility for violence. State the difference between understanding social injury and excusing an individual's harmful action. This prevents the answer from treating art as a certificate of virtue.
5. Analyse Nath's public involvement. He is pressured into supporting Arun's autobiography despite his knowledge of the marriage. His positions as father, reformer and public speaker conflict. Explain why public recognition becomes ethically difficult when it may obscure private harm.
6. Examine dramatic presentation. The audience knows more about the domestic situation than a purely celebratory public account would disclose. This discrepancy makes Nath's role uncomfortable and produces irony between reputation and conduct.
7. Preserve complexity in the conclusion. The appropriate issue is not whether good writing must be produced by good people. It is how institutions and individuals recognise literary achievement while remaining accountable to those harmed by the writer. The play offers a conflict to evaluate, rather than an uncomplicated rule that artistic merit cancels responsibility.

5. How do the title, structure and dialogue make Kanyadaan an effective social drama?

Answer outline - develop into connected analytical paragraphs.

1. Introduce form and argument. Kanyadaan tests public ideals through a private marriage. Its effectiveness depends on making social disagreement occur between people with emotional ties and immediate responsibilities. Explain the dramatic effects of techniques instead of listing them.

2. Interpret the title. Giving a daughter in marriage raises questions about paternal authority and personhood. Jyoti's choice complicates the image of a passive gift, while Nath's political investment makes the cost of the giving significant. Link title to agency and sacrifice.
3. Explain the broad two-act movement. Early expectation is followed by damaging consequences. The later marriage tests Nath's earlier confidence, allowing the audience to reassess arguments in the light of experience. Avoid unsupported scene numbers or claims about exact intervals.
4. Analyse dialogue as action. Questions and objections alter the direction of family discussion. Nath, Seva, Jayaprakash, Jyoti and Arun offer different interpretations. Their interaction places authority under pressure without supplying a single narrator's final judgement.
5. Discuss contrasting voices. Nath's confidence and the doubts expressed by Seva and Jayaprakash help reveal the limits of the reformist experiment. Arun's literary identity and abusive conduct create another important contrast. Explain how comparison complicates audience judgement.
6. Consider the household setting. Political beliefs become personal when a daughter must live their consequences. Affection, obligation and disagreement occupy the same space. Discuss this effect without inventing properties, lighting cues or gestures.
7. Explain irony and the ending. An act expected to advance freedom becomes implicated in domination. Jyoti's final challenge does not remove every constraint, so resolution remains uneasy. Conclude that the play's social force arises from the audience's need to judge relationships and contradictions rather than simply accept a reformist slogan.

03 / Revise

The play in one minute

Kanyadan (*Kanyadaan* in OUP editions) by Vijay Tendulkar examines a marriage between Jyoti, a Brahmin woman, and Arun Athavale, a Dalit writer. Nath, Jyoti's reform-minded father, supports the match. The abusive relationship that follows exposes the distance between social ideals and responsibility towards actual people. The ending remains disturbing: Jyoti challenges her father's values while remaining with Arun. Read this as a particular dramatic conflict, never as a general judgement on Dalit people or inter-caste marriage. Academic review of this draft is pending.

Ten work facts

1. The original play is in Marathi.
2. Academic scholarship dates the Marathi play to 1983.
3. The prescribed English translation is by Gowri Ramnarayan.
4. Oxford University Press publishes it as *Kanyadaan*.
5. The title concerns giving a daughter in marriage.
6. Research identifies a two-act structure.
7. Jyoti is Nath and Seva's daughter; Jayaprakash is her brother.
8. Arun Athavale is Jyoti's husband and a writer of poetry and autobiography.
9. Nath supports the inter-caste match; Seva and Jayaprakash raise doubts.
10. Jyoti experiences domestic violence, and the ending challenges her parental household's assumptions.

Five author facts

1. Vijay Tendulkar was an Indian playwright.
2. His principal literary language was Marathi.
3. His career included screenwriting.
4. He also wrote essays and journalism and worked as a social commentator.
5. His other plays include *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *Sakharam Binder*, *Kamala* and *Ghashiram Kotwal*, collected by OUP in translation.

Character anchors

Nath Devalalikar: Politician, father and social reformer. His willingness to cross caste boundaries is sincere, but he expects his daughter's marriage to vindicate a political ideal. Ask when care for Jyoti gives way to investment in the experiment.

Jyoti: Daughter, reader and wife. She chooses Arun, suffers abuse and ultimately challenges the worldview she inherited. Her assertiveness does not establish that she has escaped every form of domination.

Arun Athavale: Dalit poet and autobiographical writer. He brings caste injury into the privileged household's conversation, yet commits violence within his marriage. His actions remain his responsibility; historical oppression is not a justification for abuse.

Seva: Mother and activist. Her practical questions test Nath's optimism. Consider how protective concern can coexist with assumptions about caste and class.

Jayaprakash: Jyoti's brother. His questioning provides a countervoice to Nath and helps distinguish having suffered injustice from being incapable of inflicting it.

Four incidents to retain

- **The marriage announcement:** establishes the family's competing responses and turns reform into a personal decision.
- **Arun's encounter with the household:** exposes differences of experience and gives warning signs that optimistic language can overlook.
- **The abusive marriage, including violence during pregnancy:** makes bodily safety central and prevents the conflict from remaining a theoretical debate.
- **Nath's public support for Arun's autobiography and Jyoti's final confrontation:** connect literary recognition, private conduct, paternal authority and disillusionment.

Use these as evidence. Do not substitute invented quotations for accurate paraphrase. Detailed scene positions and names should be checked in your prescribed copy.

Themes, concepts and techniques

Idealism and responsibility: A principle becomes ethically weak when protecting it matters more than the people affected by it. Nath's challenge is to act against caste while recognising evidence of harm.

Caste and symbolic reform: Crossing a marriage boundary does not automatically remove entrenched inequalities. The play questions the sufficiency of a symbolic achievement; it does not establish that equality is impossible.

Gender and patriarchy: Ask who has authority and who pays the cost of competing convictions. Jyoti's suffering links private marriage to public political belief.

Agency: Choice exercised within constraints. Jyoti can reject her father's authority while remaining exposed to her husband's violence. Avoid treating endurance as liberation by definition.

Art and ethics: Appreciation of Arun's writing and condemnation of his abuse can coexist. Nath's public praise makes that distinction difficult to maintain honestly.

Paternalism: Claiming to help while assuming the right to direct another person's life. Nath's imagined transformation of Arun is a useful example to examine.

Foil: A contrasting character who reveals another's assumptions. Jayaprakash's doubts sharpen the audience's view of Nath.

Irony: An action expected to advance freedom becomes entangled with domination. Analyse the gap between expectation and consequence.

Two-act movement and dialogue: The later consequences answer earlier confidence. Dialogue supplies competing viewpoints without a single authoritative narrator.

Five exam questions to practise

1. How does *Kanyadaan* examine the limits of Nath's social idealism?
2. Discuss Jyoti's agency and the significance of the ending.
3. Examine the relationship between caste and gender in the play.
4. How does Arun's literary identity complicate ethical judgement?
5. Explain how the title, dialogue and dramatic structure develop the central conflict.

These are original practice prompts, not authenticated past-paper questions. Before submitting an answer, check that you have answered its specific demand, stated a clear argument, used accurate incidents, explained dramatic effects and avoided caste generalisations. Keep plot summary brief and spend more space explaining how the evidence supports your claim.

Sources & review notes

- Academic review is pending; this is an original study-support draft.
- The entire prescribed English script was not accessed. Plot and character details are cross-checked against publisher information and original academic studies, rather than a fresh line-by-line reading of the prescribed edition.
- No quotations, page references or exact scene references are supplied. Verify stage directions and any examination quotation in the prescribed edition.
- Sources vary in the family-name spellings Devalikar/Devlalikar/Devalalikar. Devalalikar is used consistently here; standardise to the prescribed edition during academic review.
- Sources vary between MLA and MLC for Nath. The guide uses politician/social reformer and avoids an unsupported precise office.
- The first English-translation date is not asserted because one academic paper's 2005 claim conflicts with earlier OUP edition metadata.
- The title Kanyadan follows the syllabus usage while Kanyadaan follows OUP bibliographic usage. The translator is Gowri Ramnarayan per the publisher.
- All 38 questions are original practice questions. No claim about previous-year frequency, marks allocation, official question format or predictive importance is made.
- Key questions identify useful revision priorities, not predicted examination questions.

References

Oxford University Press: KANYADAAN - Oxford India Paperbacks

<https://india.oup.com/product/kanyadaan-oip-9780195663808/>

Confirms the Marathi original, Gowri Ramnarayan translation, bibliographic spelling Kanyadaan, and broad marriage/social-change premise. Publisher metadata describes a 2002 paperback; this is not asserted as the first translation date.

Oxford University Press: Collected Plays in Translation

<https://india.oup.com/product/collected-plays-in-translation-9780195669138/>

Confirms the Tendulkar collected-volume title and the inclusion of Kanyadaan, Kamala, Silence! The Court is in Session, Sakham Binder and Ghashiram Kotwal. The full prescribed script was not accessed.

Ania Loomba: Inter-Caste Marriage and the Liberal Imagination: Vijay Tendulkar's Kanyadaan

<https://www.mumbai theatreguide.com/dramas/features/13/dec/inter-caste-marriage-the-liberal-imagination.asp>

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<https://researchscholar.co.in/downloads/26-umesh-kumar2.pdf>

Original Research Scholar 2(3), August 2014 research paper. Supports core cast, plot, two-act movement and interpretive debate. Its claim of a 2005 English translation is inconsistent with OUP's 2002 edition metadata and has not been used.

Smitha Mary Sebastian and Santosh Kumar: Intrusive Memories and Re-performance of Collective Trauma in Kanyadaan

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2455328X251319618>

Original research article, Contemporary Voice of Dalit, first online 12 March 2025. Publisher abstract confirms concern with caste trauma and gendered violence. Its interpretation is presented as scholarship rather than an agreed authorial message.

Sebastian and Kumar: Author-uploaded full research article

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/389799147_Intrusive_Memories_and_Re-performance_of_Collective_Trauma_in_Kanyadaan

Full original article uploaded by co-author Santosh Kumar; consulted to cross-check the autobiography/public-support incident, character functions and final confrontation. No dialogue quoted or republished.

Aparna Dharwadker: Tendulkar, Vijay (1928-2008), Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism

<https://www.rem.routledge.com/articles/tendulkar-vijay-1928-2008>

Publisher-indexed author entry supports Marathi theatre career and work in playwriting, screenwriting, journalism, essays and social commentary. The indexed entry was accessible in search; full page returned 403. Exact birth date and award chronology are omitted.

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