

GCE
Drama Example Materials

Candidate F - Example Work with Commentaries

Edexcel
GCE Drama (6DR01 paper 01)
2009

Metamorphosis – Language.

Character/Key quotation	Practical Application	Meaning
<p><u>At the beginning:</u> Mr S: Gregor!</p> <p><u>Towards the end:</u> Mr S: Our son! You can't call him our son anymore. Not that thing in there – our son has left us.</p>	<p>The first quote, which is taken from the section of the play where Gregor has hidden himself in his room and will not open the door. Mr Samsa is calling his name, almost begging him to open the door. Mr Samsa is knelt down, facing the door. He calls Gregors name loudly, but calmly.</p> <p>The second quote, which is taken from later in the play shows Mr Samsa denying his son's place in the family. He is shouting, angry and obviously distressed. He towers over his wife and points at the door at which Gregor is hiding behind. By raising their voices, they create a sense of urgency, distress and almost the idea of lost hope. It seems they are worn out and this is shown in their voices.</p>	<p>These two quotes show the distinctive change between Mr Samsa's feelings towards Gregor at the beginning when he seems open towards Gregor and his new change to his approach to him at the end. At the beginning Mr Samsa seems relatively happy with calling Gregor his son and showing he cares. By the end it seems that Mr Samsa cannot bare the idea of calling Gregor his son, he feels ashamed and angry at Gregor for the troubles he has brought upon the family.</p>
<p>Greta: Encourage him! Don't threaten!</p>	<p>Greta stands between Mr Samsa and the door, acting as protection for Gregor. She uses her own body as a barrier between the door and her father. She stares fixated at a point in the audience, purposefully not directing her anger at her father. Greta is very demanding; her commands are spoken in a distinct but pleading way.</p>	<p>The idea of Greta using herself to protect Gregor is reassuring, as it proves to the audience that she will not desert him anytime soon. Unlike her father, as it seems he is getting exasperated already at Gregor's inability and change. The short sentences create a sense of tension between the characters.</p>
<p>Gregor: I've not left you – I'm coming back soon... Oh God, you make me so ashamed... I must speak... I must...I must gather all my strength together and</p>	<p>Gregor speaks these lines in desperation, he is desperate to speak to his mother who has begun to doubt him, and he is desperate to be heard.</p> <p>Gregor struggles to speak; his arms and legs stay motionless on the ground, only his head moves, staring helplessly at the audience. Once he finishes his lines, the lights dim and he is left in a black out and complete silence. Gregor's speech is forced, he is in need of help and is almost poetic in presenting</p>	<p>The audience interprets Gregor's lines as almost a plea for help and therefore feel sorry for him. It is important that the audience continue to care for the play to have its full effect. The blackout and silence relate to his emotional state, he is alone and in the dark. He is helpless and needs his family more than ever; it does</p>

<p>Speak to her.</p>	<p>these lines.</p>	<p>not help that they are unaware of this and believe that he is not willing to speak to them. The rhythmic pronunciation and delivery of the lines create a sense of urgency and need.</p>
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Metamorphosis - Non Verbal Communication

Yet again, this lie shows the acceptance Greta has for the lodgers strengthening. She again, repeats her previous movements and smiles approvingly.

Greta is pleased with this comment from the lodger and smiles softly, in a welcoming way. She shifts slowly towards her parents to show approval of the lodgers.

1st L: It's warm.

2nd L: It's pleasant.

3rd L: A little cramped, but it'll do.

Mrs S: We'll try and make it comfortable.

Mr S: It's a very friendly household - say the word and we'll do our best.

Greta: (giggling) What funny faces!

Mrs S: Sssssh!

Greta's father attempts to please and present a united front to the lodgers. Greta watches on in surprise at his newly found want to 'please'.

This first criticism, puts up an emotional barrier between Greta and the lodgers.

On this lie, Greta who is usually quiet and reserved begins giggling uncontrollably.

She moves away from them, backing away towards the wall slowly.

She lifts her arms to the air and moves them around wildly with excitement.

This shows both her nerves, but also the sense of hope and innocence.

This lie brings Greta back down to earth and she suddenly resumes her adult-like nature and stance. She straightens her back and crosses her arms to show authority.

Overview: This is a scene which proves Greta's innocence and immaturity in comparison to the rest of her family. She is overcome by both embarrassment and excitement at the arrival of the lodgers.

Gregor struggles to speak: his arms and legs stay motionless on the ground, only his head moves, staring helplessly at the audience. Once he finishes this part of his monologue, the lights dim and he is left in a black out in complete silence.

Gregor speaks with desperation and need.

Gregor speaks softly, but with distress.

Metamorphosis - Vocal awareness

special emphasis on 'resent' to prove its importance.

the repetition of 'resent' creates the illusion of Gregor being stuck in a 'rut'. He is alone and confused.

Gregor: I've not left you - I'm coming back soon - I didn't resent anything, even if I didn't keep much money for myself, I didn't resent it.
 Oh God, you make me so ashamed, I could hide away for ever.
 If only I could speak to you, if I could thank you Greta for looking after me, perhaps you'd all get used to me - I just can't stand the silence - I must speak - I must - I must gather all my strength together and speak to her.

Gregor speaks with a distorted tone, he is whispering softly as if he is finding it very hard to pronounce each word.

The rhythmic pronunciation of the three "musts" creates a sense of urgency and need.

This is a rhetorical question and adds to the suspense and Gregor's desperation.

The emphasis on 'I for ever' adds to the desperation Gregor feels.

• Gregor's speech is forced, he is in need of help and is almost poetic in presenting these lines.

Gregor speaks these lines in desperation, he is desperate to speak to his mother who has begun to doubt him, he is desperate to be heard.

He uses a distorted, almost robotic, emotionless tone throughout. This shows his inhuman state.

Characterisation - Metamorphosis

Gregor's journey.

Metamorphosis follows the story of one family and their reaction to the news that their son, Gregor has transformed into a beetle.

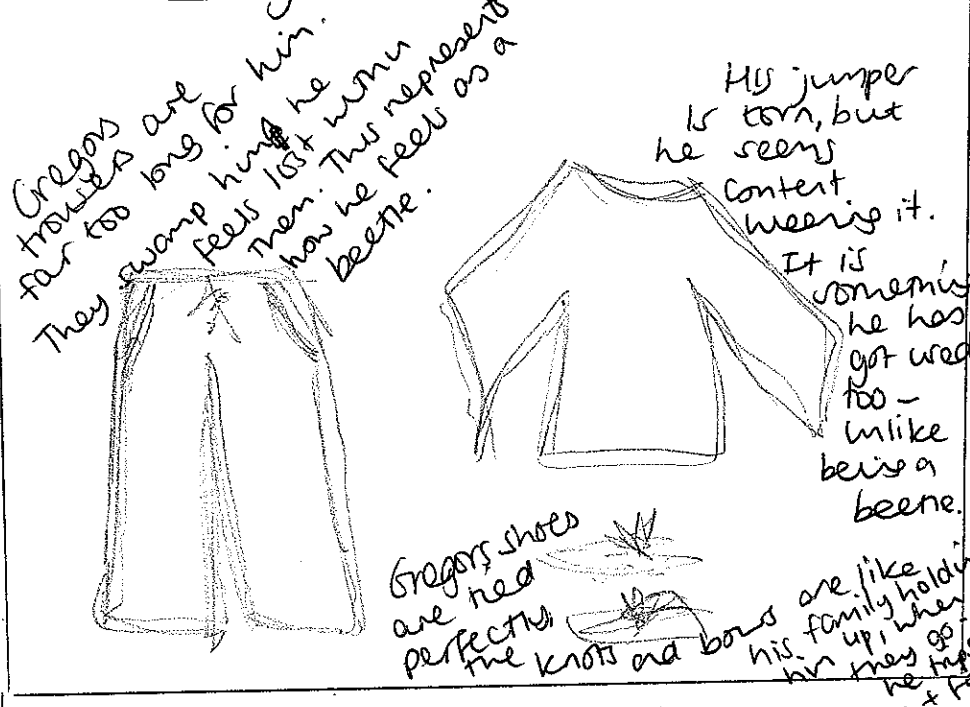
HUMAN GREGOR:

As a human, Gregor seemed content, but not overly enthusiastic about his life. However it is certain he adored his family. He had no limitations and was enjoying adult life.

BEEBLE GREGOR:

As a beetle Gregor, is restricted and held back. He becomes jealous of his family and their freedom.

Gregor's costume.



Quotes which represent Gregor's decline / change.

Beginning → "I'll go right up to the chief myself and tell him what I think of him". Gregor appears determined and strong.

End → "Free ... Free"

At this point, Gregor has lost all strength and gives up. This is a good contrast to the other quote at the beginning of the play.

Change in his relationships

At the very beginning of the play, the whole family accepts one another and are supportive.

The longer Gregor stays a beetle, the more stress is placed on the relationships and one by one, little by little it is obvious that the bonds are weakening.

Mr Samsa faces extra pressure money-wise and so works hard long hours. Mrs Samsa tries her best to stay sympathetic and caring, but has little support from the rest of the family. Grete begins to mature and dislike Gregor for leaving her family apart.

Contextualising the script: Metamorphosis

Franz Kafka was born in Prague, on July 3, 1883 into a middle-class Jewish family. Kafka's father was a bully, both to Kafka and his mother especially. In Kafka's autobiography which he wrote in 1919, he blamed his father for his inability to break his family ties and establish an independent married life for himself. Kafka believed his father had made him feel permanently impotent, within this; he likened himself to an insect. He accused his father of hating and despising him. This can be clearly linked to the idea of Gregor and his father's relationship in *Metamorphosis* as there is very little obvious love shown.

It seems Kafka must have felt extremely isolated both from his family, but also society. He was a German speaker in a county where the majority spoke Czech and it is even unsure that he found companionship with other Jews.

Metamorphosis clearly shows the emotional battle between father and son. Mr Samsa, Gregor's father is a strict man; he seems unkind in his actions towards Gregor and controls the family as a whole. It seems he tries to influence Mrs Samsa, in how she should feel towards Gregor throughout the play. *Metamorphosis* and Franz Kafka's story are both similar, it seems that *Metamorphosis* was written by Kafka to describe his emotions and how he interpreted his relationship with the rest of his family, especially his father and how he felt he was treated as an outsider. Later, Stephen Berkoff went on to interpret Kafka's ideas into a theatrical piece.

Metamorphosis focuses on the pressure from society and individuals in particular towards Kafka. The play shows the pressures young people face from society, the high expectations and struggles those trying to succeed may face.

To a contemporary audience, the beetle may be a metaphor for those trying to succeed under pressure, especially the young. The play relates to the modern world as many people face the pressures that Gregor does, only in a different way. Gregor's inability could be seen as a number of different faults in society today. It all relates to social acceptance or lack of it towards someone who appears to be different. Gregor could be perceived as a socialist as he seems to be owned and controlled by those higher than him with power – in Gregor's case his father. In displaying Gregor in this way, it could be seen that Berkoff was describing the political on goings at the time – that those in power were only looking out for themselves and not interested in helping those really in need.

Stephen Berkoff grew up in Luton, shortly after the war, his family moved to New York to meet the rest of his family. It was seen as an opportunity for a new life and new prospects, however Berkoff's father felt he was too old to start afresh and so the family returned home to East London after six months. Around the age of 19, Berkoff decided to go and see a play and realised that this was what he had been looking for. Soon after, he signed up for drama classes at the City Lit Institute.

Berkoff went on to drama in both England and Paris. His first production in London was the 'Metamorphosis of Kafka'. The play itself had had a remarkably impression on him, he describes it as 'overwhelming' and the identification so strong it was imperative for him to play the beetle. He played the part of the beetle, as a human trapped inside a beetle's body. His physical movement was an attempt to enact the rhythm of an insect, the frantic scurrying, and desperate movements. The fixed play contained only dialogue, the scenario absent and the descriptions and thoughts of those on stage missing. It was almost as if Berkoff meant for the actors to speak one thing, but clearly think another. The impact of the different styles of practical theatre he used ensure that the play the desirable impact. The audience were faced with a realistic, but dream like piece which captured Kafka's original work exactly. The piece itself is based on surrealism, with strong physical performances and is a slight rebellion to 'normal' theatre.

Like Berkoff, Antonin Artaud rebelled against the traditions of realism. His theatre was much more immediate, full of physical work instead of spoken words, which were to represent ideas and attitudes of mind in an inexplicable way. Artaud's written work was also different to that of others in the past; his disturbing, radical work influenced a generation of theatrical practitioners along the path of experimentation. He inspired them to try new ways of performing a piece with the desired impact. An obvious example of his influences would be Stephen Berkoff, who interpreted Artaud's work into his own. In comparison to his rebellious theatrical style, his view on theatre was one of conformity. He believed that a piece of theatre should be a total experience of light, sound and text.

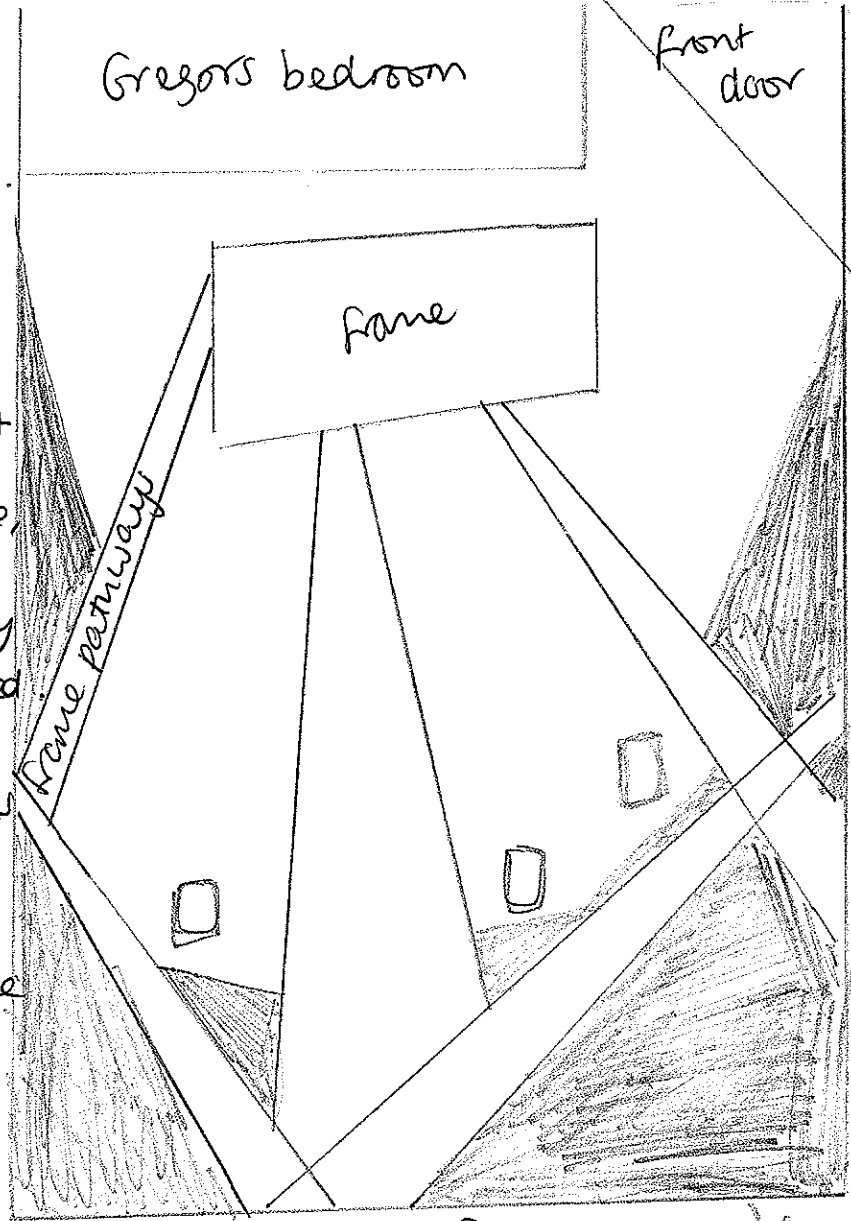
Artaud believed that the audience should feel trapped, enclosed and powerless in comparison to the spectacle on stage. He also believed that there should be no boundaries between actor and audience and that the actors should invade the audience. Stephen Berkoff was obviously highly influenced by Artaud's work as *metamorphosis* interprets many of his ideas. The piece itself is very physical; the lighting sophisticated and deliberate as well as the body language of the actors being overwhelming to the audience.

Aural

All actors onstage will use microphones to ensure clarity. I will use sound effects throughout my piece to emphasise the abstract, in natural style of the play. I will pre-record sounds and play them from behind the audience to create an eerie atmosphere. Gasps will be used to represent shock and all actors voices will be distorted and inhuman. Spatial in Artaud style.

My set is designed specifically so that the stage is surrounded. This relates to the idea of entrapment and the restriction Gregor has imposed on him. Gregor's bedroom is positioned purposefully, a great distance from the audience. This expresses the isolation Gregor feels. Spotlights are used throughout to pick up important facial expressions.

The Visual/Aural and Spatial elements of the production - Metamorphosis



□ = stools // = frame pathways

Costume

Mr Samsa is the only member of the family who I have decided to dress 'smartly'. His suit and top hat can be seen as his own form of protection from the outside world.

Greta and Mrs Samsa are alike in costume, they both wear bland and simple dresses. This shows their lack of wealth. Gregor wears trousers which are too long and a jumper with holes in. This represents the key scene: idea of him being lost.

Opening scene. The family and Gregor: They enter slowly, one by one, animal like towards the stools. None of the family look at Gregor's door; instead they stare out to the audience, menacingly. When it is Gregor's turn to speak he drops down from the frame, in human form. The frame is a constant reminder of his metamorphosis. The family moves in unison + with an inhuman posture and voice delivery. Audience their lives meanwhile, Gregor fades back to his room.

Metamorphosis and Artaud

Artaud aimed for the audience to feel trapped, enclosed and powerless by abolishing the idea of boundaries between actor and audience. He believed in the idea of the theatre of cruelty, the aim of this was to desensitise the audience so that they would become in touch with their inner feelings and opinions without holding anything back. Artaud wanted a true reaction from the audience and so believed that to get this, he and his actors would have to remove all the audiences' boundaries before reaching the honest emotion. Every part of this style of theatre was invading, sound especially was recorded at full volume and proved an overpowering experience for the audience. Acting was ritualised, physical and breath control was seen as a strength. Artaud wanted to create a new style of language based solely on movement, gestures, postures and cries. Repetition and sound patterns were introduced to replace traditional speech as well as the idea of layering sound to create different atmospheres.

The idea of the doppelgänger was a favourite of Artaud and he often included this in his themes of dream and reality working together to create the truth. It was his aim to create a heightened reality.

Interpretation - Metamorphosis

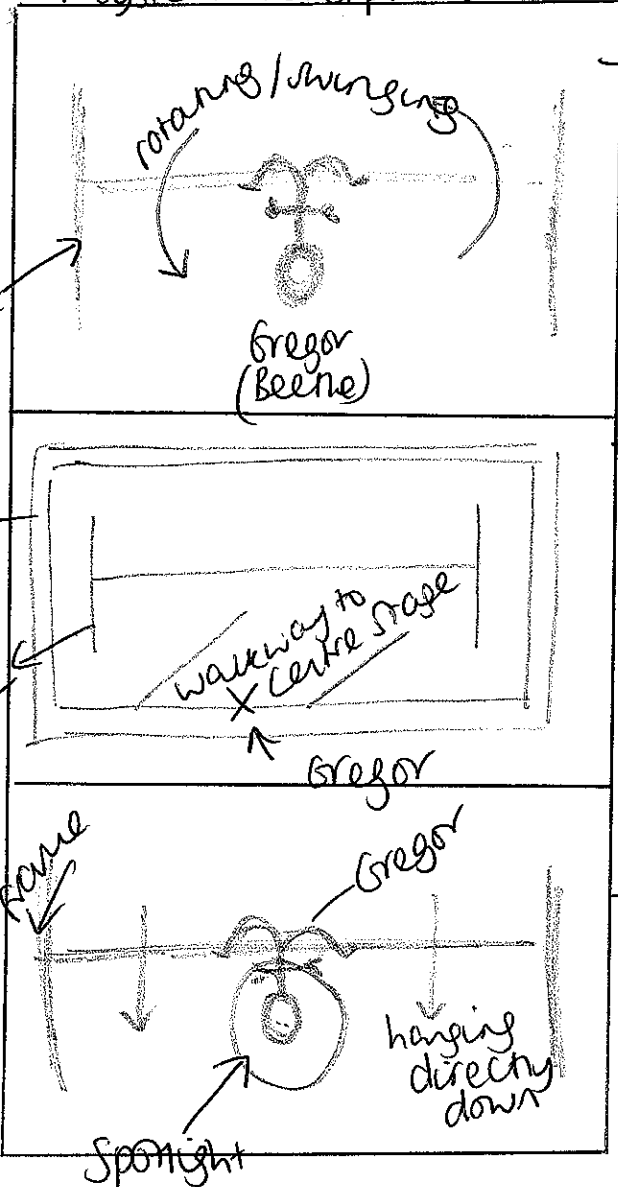
Gregor: I liked hanging from the ceiling. → talks of the past, accepting the present?
 It was better than the floor - one breathed more freely
 and I can swing and rock backwards and forwards, → positive?
 forwards and backwards - I feel so light, → repetition → links to his new life? its
 and I can see the hospital across the street -
 all I can see from the floor is the drab, grey sky - constraints?
 I so much want to see my mother - it's so long since I've seen her - limitations?
 perhaps I'm too hideous ever to see her again.

Old life →
 + job.

doubt. emphasis rhetorical question desperation

is Gregor presenting his question as fact or is he expecting an answer?

Physical interpretation.



→ Gregor hangs, slowly begins to swing backwards & forwards whilst slowly end in a distorted voice speaking his first line within the monologue.

→ Gregor, climbs down from the metal frame and walks (Beene movement) to centre stage. He then talks of the hospital and the darkness of being a beetle as he is hunted and under restraints -

→ Gregor returns to hanging from the frame. Repetition links back to his life and how stuck in routine as a bug he feels. He talks of his desperation to

talk to his mother again, his eyes wide with sadness, a spotlight picks up only on his facial expressions and this creates a very effective scene.

In this scene, Gregor is very much doubting his new life and missing his old ways. He is desperate to see his mother and to talk as a human again.

Oedipus Rex – Language.

Character	Key quotation	Meaning and Practical application
Oedipus	“You will regret this old man. You’re blind all over, ears, mind as well as eyes.”	This quote proves Oedipus’ childish ways; as soon as it seems he has been outwitted he retaliates with abuse. There is a definite degeneration of his language from royal oration to childish comebacks. At this point in the play, the audience could easily doubt Oedipus’ intellect and ability as King. Oedipus speaks with arrogance and power, he believes he is right and shows this through his direct and almost parading way of speech.
Tiresias	Oedipus: “speak plainly, don’t talk in riddle” Tiresias: “why not! You have a genius for solving them!” Oedipus: “Yes, I’m famous for it. And your sneers and insults won’t make me any the less incisive.” Tiresias: “That fame is your misfortune”	The use of stichomythia in exchanges between Oedipus and Tiresias is used to quicken the pace and tension in the relationship between the two men. Tiresias seems to be more intelligent than Oedipus and has the ability to produce sarcasm without coming across to the audience as being dim-witted.
Jocasta	“Go inside my husband-and you too, Creon, go back to your own house”	Jocasta seems to take on a motherly role. Her language is used in such a way that she seems to have a parental control over other characters, especially Oedipus. She uses a maternal tone which exerts control in different situations. She commands and almost persuades the two men to do as she says.

On this line, I would wave my arms about frantically to show my distraught state, I would present this line in a lowered, almost hushed tone, in desperation to make Oedipus ask no more. As the line ends, I would wrap my arms around Oedipus neck in a caring, but nurturing way (to represent the mother/lover situation) and speak softly in an attempt to persuade and comfort.

Oedipus Rex - Non Verbal Communication

Oedipus speaks with such arrogance in comparison to Jocasta who is simply, pleading him to do the right thing and ask no more!

Jocasta speaks with desperation, begging Oedipus to do as she says.

Oedipus: Forget it! Of course I can't forget it! What nonsense! My births a mystery, But with all these clues, I intend to solve it!
 Jocasta: Listen to me in heavens name, Listen. If you want to stay alive this search must end. It's making me ill, I'm sick with it already, as she says.

isn't that enough?

Oedipus: There is no need for such gloom! Suppose it proved I was born a slave, from generations of slaves, would that sicken you? Or affect your standing?

Jocasta: Listen, I'm begging you, don't go on!

This shows her selfless aspect, however at the same time she is desperate to keep him as her husband as she loves him dearly.

Oedipus: I must go on, I must know the truth!

Jocasta: I know! I know what you're talking about. I'm telling you this for your own good.

Oedipus: And when did I ever put my own good, as you call it before the service of the state?

Jocasta: My god, you're doomed, you can't escape! I have one wish and one wish only: that you never discover who you really are.

My reaction to Oedipus's line would show my true anger at his nature. I would be at Oedipus knees, begging, but also persuading him best.

On this line, I would walk forward slowly to centre stage, fall to my knees and look directly upwards as if Oedipus were the audience. I would hold my head in my hands and with wide eyes show my regret and disgust at the situation.

Oedipus presents Jocasta with a rhetorical question, which throws Jocasta into a blind rage and desperation. She is angry as she is only trying to protect and save Oedipus from himself.

Overview: This is a moment of realisation for Jocasta. She is a woman in despair and pain. She urges Oedipus not to continue his search, as she understands the pain and disgust he will feel when he too discovers the truth.

The word agony will reflect its meaning and be spoken as if its vocalist is in pain. This will add to the impact of the passage and strengthen its meaning.

The use of choral work emphasises the meaning and importance of the passage. It immediately entices the audience and shows true passion.

Oedipus Rex - Vocal awareness

Our agonies are beyond telling,
A whole city slowly dying
From an enemy no man can fight.

This line would be delivered, clearly and slowly in a quiet, but audible hush. It will portray the image of the story being told which certain people are trying to hide - "the truth coming out".

The contrast of these lines makes this so effective and strong. This line would be said innocently, full of youth and free - the complete opposite of how those in Thebes are living. This will offer a

Slime and fungus on orchard and meadow,
Death in the womb and birth in the shadow
Of death, and in the mother's sight.
Men die without number, like birds flying,
Like fire consuming, despairing, crying,
As they pass to the shadows of night.

This line would be spoken once as a chorus, then each person would begin to repeat it and fade out, until all members have said it.

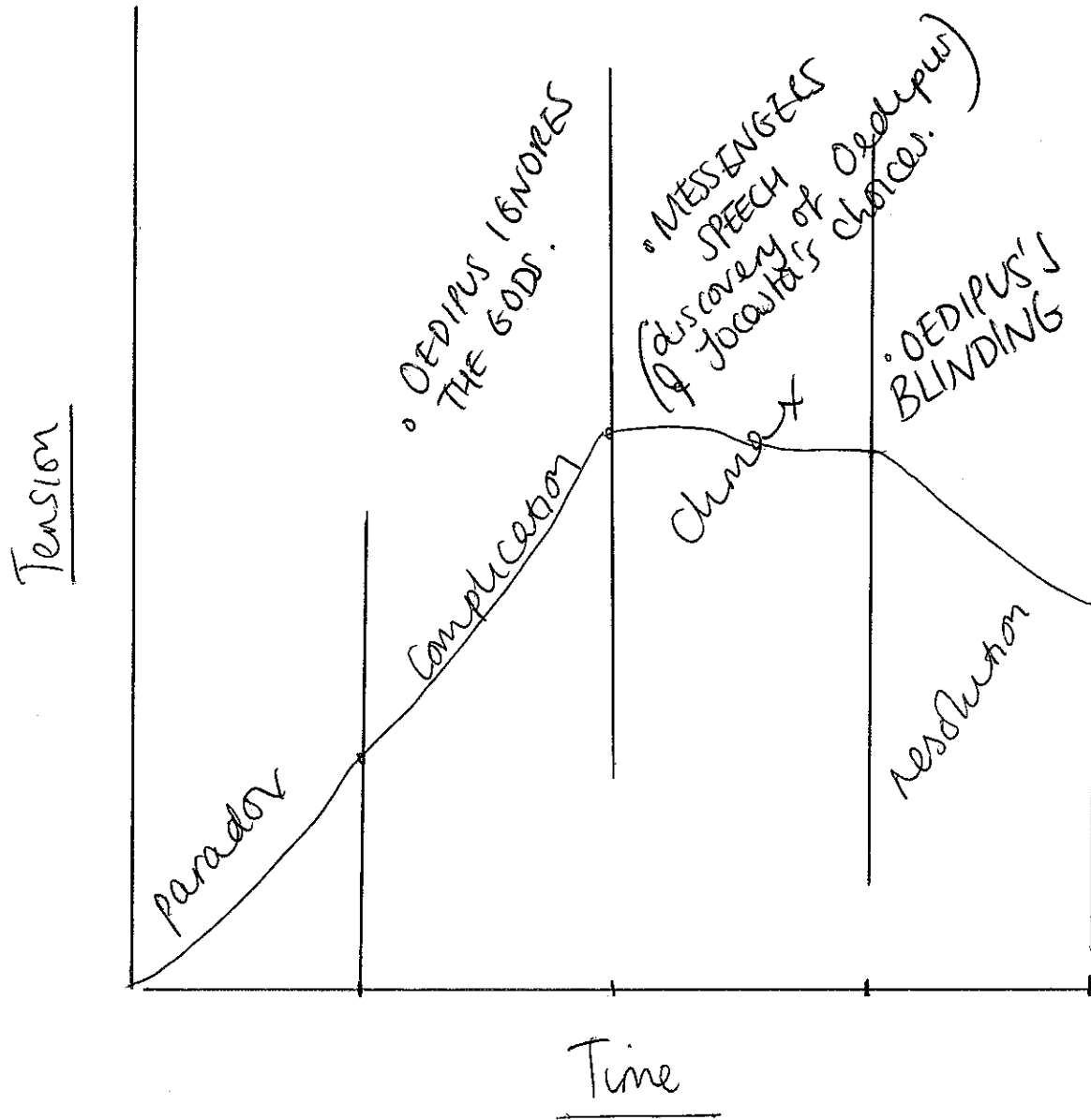
Yet again, this is a descriptive and allusive line holding strong comparisons. It would be spoken in a commanding way to show the horror within it.

This creates the idea of being stuck in a circle, not being able to escape fate. These words, provide a rhythmic sense to this line. The words will be spoken in accordance to their meaning, for example "crying" would be spoken through tears - thus, adding to the effect.

The chorus speaks these lines in horror, they are explaining and describing the true state of the City of Thebes. The united front they portray strengthens their descriptions and adds to the desperation they feel.

A Graph to show the events of Oedipus.

Characterisation - Oedipus Rex



Oedipus' Character.

Oedipus wears white as this conveys an angelic appearance - this is ironic as he is the opposite. He wears a crown, beautiful and gold, but wears it with arrogance and so, its true beauty is lost. CONT AT BOTTOM.

Exodus (proves for hope, the idea that what will happen next? Will Creon be a good king?)

At the end of the play, Oedipus wears the red rope Jocasta used to hang herself with as a crown. This is a constant reminder of his part in her death.

Oedipus' Journey.

The play Oedipus follows the story of one man, and his desperate battle against his own power, the gods and in some aspects - his own fate. He is king of Thebes which gets hit by a plague - Oedipus is determined to get rid of it. In a turn of fate, it is revealed Oedipus is the cause as he killed his father and is a lone man his mother. His decline is shown from bold and arrogant to desperate and broken.

Contextualising the play Oedipus Rex

Oedipus Rex was written around 406 BC, at the time society revolved around the Gods, Myths and Legends. At the time, the story of Oedipus would have been well known, teaching its audience of inescapable fate and the morals behind Oedipus' self worship and inevitable failure.

It was believed that the theatres were places of great cultural, spiritual and religious significance. The role of the audience was to watch and take heed of the moral guidance given. In the tale of Oedipus, the moral message would be to realise that those who are arrogant and have power will fail. This is extended in Oedipus the king by the idea that Oedipus treats the Gods with little respect and therefore almost deserves the consequences which arise. It is clear to the Greek audience that fate and destiny are inescapable. They are always competing against freewill. Whichever action Oedipus takes out of his own choice, his fate is predetermined by the Gods.

The theatre in 406BC was taken extremely seriously and was seen more as a cultural or religious teaching, unlike today where many go to the theatre for entertainment.

"I am Oedipus the King, everyone knows my name" – this quote shows Oedipus' boastful and arrogant attitude when in power, but as the play progresses and he loses his power he becomes weaker, as do the strength of his speeches. This is shown especially when he talks of his state of mind and physical blindness; "The nightmarish blackness that surrounds me. I shall never see daylight again"

The disease and famine that Oedipus faces reflects the state of the City of Athens and could possibly show how Sophocles believes the city is being poorly treated. Throughout the play, Sophocles uses many metaphors to draw comparisons between Oedipus' world and his very own thoughts.

Practically, Sophocles improves Greek theatre greatly. He introduced more actors in a cast, increased tension and the possibilities for dramatic interchange. A particular example of the introduction of more than two characters onstage is the episode between Jocasta, Oedipus and Creon. The text is difficult to follow, yet the three actors easy to interpret. Sophocles also increased the number of the chorus from twelve to fifteen. This enabled a greater number of chances for movement and voice activity onstage.

The role of the chorus in Oedipus is also slightly different to the role of it in Sophocles other plays, in Oedipus they were given a far more direct role and held emotional involvement in the play. The Gods were very important in Oedipus Rex as they showed the difference between fate and freewill. It may have been Oedipus' fate for him to kill his father and marry his mother, but his reactions to the consequences and revelations were his own doings.

A modern audience would struggle to understand this as the concept of an all powerful, ruling and controlling god may seem alien to those who are not religious. The idea of fate being inescapable may also seem hard to understand as modern day life is based mostly on the idea of 'free will' and people making their own choices.

The Greek people had complete fear, trust and faith in the Gods. They believed that the Gods shaped everyone's lives. There is an obvious difference in the God's roles in comparison to 403BC and 2008. Nowadays the Gods are not seen as those with control and there are very few believers in comparison to the very high number in Sophocles age. This however does not take meaning away from the play. Those living in modern times can also reflect and become influenced by the story of Oedipus.

The role of women during Sophocles era is also important. The only woman in Oedipus is Jocasta and she is presented and displayed as a weak interpretation.

All actors at the time were male and so this proved the weaker social status women held. It also proves that men were accepted as dominant and almost ruling. It seems that even throughout everything Oedipus suffers he can cope, unlike Jocasta who gives in and kills herself. Sophocles made the deliberate decision to pursue Jocasta as the weaker character, most likely because she was a woman.

The play's modern relevance is significant as it proves the play still delivers the message Sophocles intended. To the modern audience this message is that those who are corrupt, arrogant and abuse any power they have will fall.

Oedipus could be Tony Blair, for once he was powerful and a respected leader, but over time he lost both his power and the people's respect for him. He lost power and support through both dishonesty and by making decisions which very few people supported.

The fact that modern day audiences can still relate to the performance gives the play a timeless element to the ideas and morals it holds.

Aural.

All actors onstage will use microphones to emphasise the clarity of lines and ensure the audience can hear them clearly.

The chorus will echo certain lines to create tension or strong emotion.

The messenger will use a toneless, monotone which will create a sense of cold and unwelcoming amongst the audience.

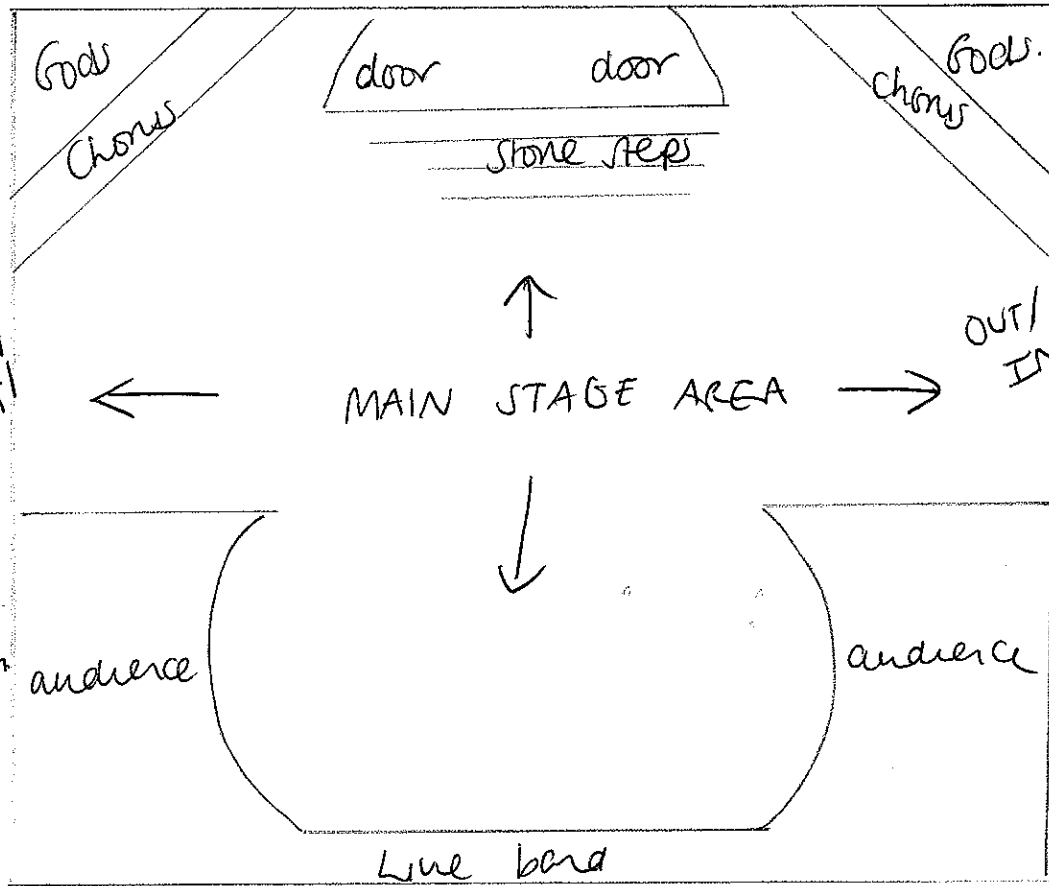
A live band will be used to accompany certain scenes to emphasise strong felt emotion.

Oedipus' entrance.

Prior to Oedipus entering, the live band will be

playing very loud, dark and overpowering music. The two large oak doors will open slowly, Oedipus will appear between them, a light lit behind him - illuminating him. This will create an eerie and superstitious feel, challenging the audience to relate and try to understand Oedipus and his actions. His arrogance and power is portrayed through the way he walks, striding forward, his hands in the air ready to hush any praise for him. I will use no backing sound as I don't want it to distract the audience.

The Visual/Aural and Spatial elements of the production - Oedipus Rex



Spatial.

There will only be two exits onstage. The two large oak doors will only be used for Oedipus' entrance and all other actors will exit or enter through side spaces.

This once again, proves Oedipus' difference compared to the other characters.

The chorus will be positioned directly beneath the Gods, watching the whole play.

The placement of the Gods above the chorus distinctly proves their connection, this is essential as it holds the very form of Greek theatre. The different levels of people onstage reflect their status.

Costume.

The costumes will be basic and similar in design, but every character will have one item to be recognised by. For example, Oedipus' crown.

Oedipus and Kneehigh

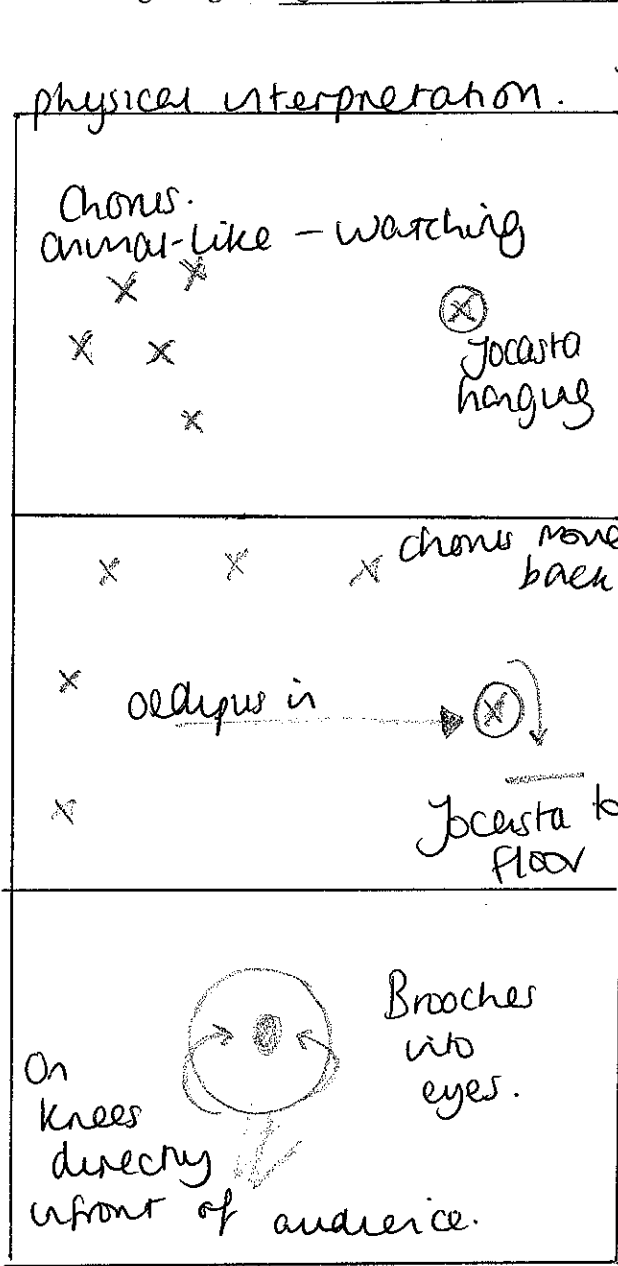
Both Kneehigh Theatre Company and the style of Oedipus combines all aspects of physical theatre to create a performance which explores controversial topics without compromise. The serious side of their work, the morals and values behind the characters and storylines are balanced out with a strong aspect of comedy. The companies' artistic director believes wholeheartedly in dealing with taboo issues in a child like way, simplifying them so that they can be related to and understood by their audience. Kneehigh's actors appear fearless and trust each other greatly, they are not afraid to mix and match different theatrical styles such as puppetry, audience interaction, ensemble work and multiple characters with an overpowering sense of team work. The wide range of performance skill which they use always entices and impresses their audience and has a vast influence on many young performers. It is safe to say that Kneehigh has character and strength to influence months after a performance is seen, their original and modernised take on traditional stories guarantees success. The practical and emotive approach to theatre that Kneehigh has proves its own passion and bravery for its place at the forefront of modern theatre.

Interpretation - Oedipus Rex

Messenger: We saw her, slowly turning in the air, soft description of a horrendous event, shows contrast.
 swinging slightly, like a pendulum,
 strung up by the neck. She'd hanged herself.

The king ran to her, loosed the rope and lifted her down,
 all the while groaning, heartbreakingly, like an animal. movement, physicality, animal-like
 He laid her gently on the floor, and then - this was unbearable, metaphor: strength → weakness.
 the worst of all - there were two golden brooches,
 pinned on her dress. He opened them up,
 held them high in the air, at arms length,
 and plunged them down into his eyeballs,
 screaming and groaning in his own guilt.

God is seen as good, represents wealth and power. Now it represents the end, weakness and a broken man.



emphasis of what has happened. 'reality hits home'. Both physically and mentally. Oedipus is blind and broken hearted.

→ The chorus are watching, representing their link with both the Gods + the audience. Jocasta is lit by a spotlight, Choral speech adds a darkness.

→ The Chorus move backwards and watch event unravel. Oedipus runs in and sees Jocasta, lifts her to the floor. All the while the Chorus are explaining the happenings through the passage. They are dimly lit and almost haunting.

→ Oedipus takes two gold brooches off Jocasta's dress and in great desperation and guilt plunges them into his eyes.

He is kneeling, centre stage staring directly out into the audience with a spotlight, just lighting his face - especially his eyes which convey his pain and loss.

x = chorus
 (x) = Jocasta

Live Theatre Evaluation – DV8

It's no surprise that DV8 are well known and respected for their work, the minimal cast seemed to provoke emotion and reaction with ease and to challenge the views of their audience immediately. Through both physical and verbatim theatre DV8 created an unmissable and thought provoking performance.

'To Be Straight With You' dealt primarily with the issues the homosexual community face and also captured the themes of race, gender and most of all tolerance and the lack of it. Not only does DV8 handle matters with simplicity, but also with a certain level of complexity at the same time by making the audience question their own beliefs throughout, making them constantly compare reasons and desperately trying to relate to the characters onstage. DV8 seemed to have the fantastic ability of contrasting serious issues with an equal measure of humour and will one moment have the audience sat on the edge of their seats in anticipation and worry and then in the next, have them laughing inconsolably.

Lloyd Newson, the director used vox pops taken from the streets of London as the central route of the piece, the rest of what occurs onstage happens as a result of what is said. By using vox pops, DV8 clearly reminds the audience the real truth of the piece and this stays with them throughout, changing their perspective on certain key moments and by the end certifying the realisation that intolerance needs to be cured.

What DV8 seem to do perfectly is find the perfect moment to add a touch of humour. There is a simply brilliant scene where a young man performs a complex and confusing skipping routine - it dazzles the audience and without fail provokes laughter which ripples uncontrollably through the auditorium. The power and energy the different images the skipping rope conjures is stunning, however the scene turns dark as the young boy tells the tale of his father response to the revelation of his sexuality. The horrific events that are described, including a chase through his house and a stabbing seem far fetched and unimaginable, but the audience are constantly reminded of the vox pops by a whiteboard with the different quotes written on. The truth that this scene represents is shocking and makes the audience question, that why in 2008 behaviour like this is still occurring. The actors move as a group, a united force at times, but at others act alone or in pacts creating the sense of confusion many people face at times in their lives and the idea of intolerance and the lack of acceptance.

The different collages the audience is presented with holds some very moving stories ranging from a DJ who plays violently homophobic tracks when he himself is gay to a Zimbabwean pastor's daughter being attacked as she tells the tale of her lesbian friend being raped with a beer bottle.

The use of film and complex lighting adds to the beauty of this piece. A lecturer stands before a digitalised globe which spins as he seems to move it accordingly to point out the countries which still hold the death penalty for homosexuality. The strength of this scene is indescribable, its timing – mid way through the play suits perfectly its meaning. The audience are just about beginning to realise the relevance of the issues DV8 are revealing and the limitations of tolerance this world poses.

Next a homosexual man and his partner tell the story of their lives in Nigeria and the hatred and intolerance they faced. The tone lightens and the audience become full of hope for them as the couple reveal that they moved to Britain for a new life, a life of acceptance and equality. As they continue it is explained that the life in London that they expected was not quite what they anticipated, they faced both racism and homophobia. This scene especially seems to shock the audience, as Britain is supposed to be a tolerant and accepting country with a tolerant and accepting society. However, some parts of British society seem not to reflect the general consensus and have very different ideals in relation to the modernised acceptance of homosexuality. The idea that this hatred and intolerance was happening in this country brought the reality of this piece home and made the audience think hard about their own beliefs.

A quotation ending with "we must be allowed to love with honour" flashes up onto the whiteboard and all of the actors turn to look at it, the lights go down and only the quote is visible. This moment reflects the darkness those living through constant homophobia face and the light of the quote is the hope for the future, the need for true equality.

The piece is relentless and consistently hammers the issue of acceptance home not for a minute letting the audience forget the themes of this life-affirming show.

One of the only criticisms that could be made of the piece would be the fact that it could easily be compared to agitated propaganda, but in all honesty I believe it is propaganda which is needed. Propaganda which recognises the faults of society and does not exaggerate, but merely presents the truth that society hides all too well and the fact that change is essential.

Sometimes the scenes seem almost too over-busy, but this could be seen purely as reflecting the state of the world, the chaos and confusion many of the key themes represent and the countless different beliefs people have related to them. Many people seem to criticise this play indefinitely by the fact that it is verbatim theatre and that it preaches only to the already converted.

On the whole, DV8 proved to stretch their artistic licence to its limits and beyond, the piece itself seemed fearless and dealt with controversial topics without compromise or restrictions. They seem to understand the audience's needs and managed to limit every scene accordingly, cutting directly to the point and proving a point clearly and with passion.

GCE
Drama Example Materials

Candidate F - Commentaries

Edexcel
GCE Drama (6DR01 paper 01)
2009

Commentary on Exploration Notes for *Candidate F*:

This candidate has separated her notes into two sections, one for each play.
Metamorphosis:

The section on language explores how some short pieces of dialogue can be delivered and what might be their meaning. At first she compares the language of Mr Samsa at the start and end of the play. This explains the way the character has developed. In her section on Gregor she comments on how the audience might continue to care for the character because of the way language has been used.

For non-verbal communication the candidate offers notes on how an actor might play the lines. This is very detailed but lacks justification for the ideas. Again, for vocal awareness, there are details of how a short section might be delivered. This is detailed and specific but not put into a context of more global ideas about the play. There is a range of practical ideas for how the character of Gregor might be played and costumed in the section about characterisation. She explores some of his relationships, though does not offer any practical observations of how she has come up with these ideas.

There is a sense from the historical, social, cultural and political contexts section that the candidate has developed notes given in class, not taken from her own observations and research. There is little evidence of the practical drama student here. She has a firm grasp of the context of the writing of the play and of the ideas of Artaud. We do not get a feeling she has explored them in the workshop.

The visual, oral, spatial elements section describes how the candidate sees her own production of the play. It is detailed and some ideas are justified. Her section on Artaud barely mentions practicalities and does not explore how his ideas might impact on its interpretation. However, the page on interpretation is stronger; there is detail and a plethora of ideas for the interpretation of a short piece of script. She has clearly experimented with staging ideas and she links these back with the themes of the whole play.

Oedipus:

Her work here is approached in the same way as for the first play. The section on language proves she understands its significance and how important it is to de-code a scene before approaching it. Several ideas are well documented with good reference made to how the audience will react and think.

The page on non-verbal communication is a textual analysis of a scene. This is very detailed and shows a practical actor at work. There is considerable complexity in her approaches to the emotion of the scene and we get a clear sense that her ideas are well developed. For vocal awareness she details how each part of a line should be approached, going so far as to place them in their historical context. She has clearly explored this scene practically and there is a sense of this as a 'work in progress'. For characterisation the candidate tracks Oedipus across the whole play, drawing a character graph. This proves her very clear understanding of the whole text but is essentially an English literature exercise, rather than one helpful for drama students. There is no reference to the practicalities of interpreting the role in ways that elucidate the character for his audience.

There are some glimpses of how the candidate's thorough understanding of the contexts of the play might be explored practically to good effect. She mentions how a contemporary interpretation might develop ideas of corruption and power to reflect those of the time when the play was first performed. However, she misses the opportunity to develop her ideas about the role of female characters in Greek theatre. Generally these notes do not represent any work the candidate might have carried out in the drama studio.

For the section on visual, aural and spatial elements there is a detailed exposition of her ideas for a production of the play. She justifies most of her ideas and these notes are good evidence of practical understanding of how a production creates meaning for the audience. However, her paragraph on the response to a practitioner does not apply the ideas of Kneehigh to Oedipus in any way.

The final page about the interpretation of the text proves this candidate's ability to engage with a play as a practical work of drama. The detailed annotations of the script are full of ideas and many are justified through an intended response from the audience.

Moderator comments:

This candidate has approached to exploration of these two texts as an actor would. Her notes reproduce in detail her ideas for the playing of the roles and for the staging of scenes. Her ideas are well developed and generally well justified. We do not get a sense of what she did, to come up with such an interesting range of ideas and proposals, however, and her notes require this element so that she might access high marks.

It is clear that the candidate must have tried out most, if not all, of her ideas, but for Unit 1 she must exemplify her writing with observations made during practical tasks.

The quality of the written communication is excellent.

Band 3

Commentary on Theatre Review for Candidate F:

The review is a highly descriptive account of the DV8 production. The candidate spends most of the essay telling the reader what happened, adding her opinions from time to time. There is no keen sense of objectivity here. She is very in tune with the reaction of the audience, linking it with contemporary life issues. She does not explore the technical elements of the production, nor how they contribute to the overall success of the performance.

Overall, the candidate has not fully separated the production from the content of the performance and has not appreciated the complexity of the methods used by this production to communicate with its audience.

Band 3