

**GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

SPEECH AND DRAMA HG

POSSIBLE ANSWERS OCT / NOV 2006

SECTION A

Answer 3 questions in this section.

Three questions must respond to three different texts.

Learners should respond to the five dramatic principles on three levels:

- **Relevant statements**
- **Reference to text to substantiate observations**
- **Awareness of the context (socio-political) in which the play was created**

STRUCTURE	CHARACTER	DIALOGUE	THEME	SPACE
Identify the structure of the play 3 MARKS	Place characters in terms of physical, social, moral and psychological aspects 3 MARKS	Place the language on a scale ranging from realistic to stylised (poetic) 3 MARKS	Identify the issues that the dramatist chose to address 3 MARKS	Identify the spatial demands of the play by interpreting the stage directions in the text 3 MARKS
Apply to the text 3 MARKS	Refer to the text 3 MARKS	Refer to the text 3 MARKS	Refer to the text 3 MARKS	Refer to the text 3 MARKS
The way in which the socio-political background to the play influenced structure 3 MARKS	The dramatist's world vision influences his concept of character 3 MARKS	The use of dialogue comments on the world in which the play was created 3 MARKS	The dramatist takes a stance from which he/she interprets the world in which the play is set. 3 MARKS	The dramatist treats space as a reflection of the world in which the play was created 3 MARKS
1 = FOCUS	1 = FOCUS	1 = FOCUS	1 = FOCUS	1 = FOCUS
10	10	10	10	10

**QUESTION 1
ABSURD THEATRE**

Stage lighting is one of Beckett's most potent instruments for creating cosmic spaces. Odd angles and other kinds of asymmetry contribute to the unsettling impression of being in some unearthly yet curiously recognizable dimension.

Write an essay with close reference to the Absurd play that you studied this year to show that the dramatist does not only express a unique interpretation of the context in which the play was created in the treatment of space but also in all the other dramatic principles.

[50]

Assessment strategies:

- The THREE levels must be addressed in a balanced manner.
- A total absence of reference to a text will be penalised with -20 marks
- Space needs to be foregrounded in each paragraph.
- All the dramatic principles must be discussed. (5x9)
- The awareness of the way in which space supports theme will be loaded with 10 of the 50 marks.
- If the learner addresses all the dramatic principles but does not foreground the space, 10 marks of the 50 will be retained. So the learner could get 40 out of 50 but not 50 out of 50.

ABSURD USE OF SPACE

The stage, which had been reduced by Realism to represent a small slice-of-life, returned to its earlier image as a metaphor for the world itself in Absurd Theatre. The stage is stripped to its bare minimum – symbolic of a void, simple and stark. The theatrical image conveys the experience of absurdity. The world/room is contained spaces, devoid of meaning. Space is either infinite or totally confining. Beckett's space conveys a sense of oppressive emptiness. Ionesco's space is more cluttered but the feeling is the same: impenetrable meaning, created by a wall of things. Whatever the specific setting, it is what the fact of space says rather than what space is made to represent, that gives atmospheric quality to Absurd Theatre.

ABSURD CHARACTERISATION

Characters are a representation of mankind in general. Characters are an abstraction of human attitudes. They demonstrate or symbolise human properties. Exaggerated characters. Interchangeable: double act. No background information on characters. Social puppet.

Acting style – BECKETT

Movement will be circular and repetitious, invested with urgency as if they might achieve something. Movement is executed with great precision and energy. When the actor stops the movement is over, reinforcing the stillness. Posture represents the image of pain but the decrepitude is not exaggerated. When characters look into space it's not a vacant look but an intense stare at nothing. Bursts of activity are often followed by complete collapse. Business consists of children's games performed with innocent enthusiasm. Actors perform gags and comic routines with ritualistic seriousness. Actors display clown-like behaviour with heightened energy; and a sense of super reality. Mechanical qualities; automatism and hyper-concentration

Acting style – IONESCO

It adheres to the French farce tradition. The actor's movements should display elements of conscious automatism. It borders on the mechanical with a puppet-like over-precision. Physical business tends to be secondary and is used to reinforce the linguistic games. Verbal rhythms demand supporting patterns of gesture. Repetitious gestures reinforce the gibberish of his speech. Ionesco uses many farce techniques, but places them within an atmosphere of conscious futility. The above remarks only indicate those aspects where Ionesco differs slightly from the accepted absurd acting style.

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL BACKGROUND TO ABSURDISM

The 19th century saw a revolution in man's way of looking at the world. New ideologies were forged which threw nations and classes into violent conflict in the 20th century. The shift of the godhead influenced the way in which people perceived themselves. **Nietzsche** ATTACKED Christianity as decadent and shocked the world with his statement that God is dead – 1883. **Darwin** destroyed notions on man as being different and special when he published his findings on evolution. His book *On the Origin of Species* and his theories on the survival of the fittest were interpreted by Victorian dergymen as a blasphemous attack on the Bible. **Marx**, the founder of modern Communism, saw history as a class struggle. He believed the philosopher's role was not only to understand history but to change it.

In Europe, the Frenchman Jean-Paul Sartre, born in 1905, developed the philosophy of Existentialism. In his Theory of Relativity, **Albert Einstein** revolutionised man's concept of the nature of time and energy. His ideas challenged the fixed or essential truth that had served mankind for two thousand years.

The First (1914 – 18) and Second (1939 – 45) **World Wars** were fought on a scale larger than any other in history. The costs both in material and casualties were higher than ever before but out of the carnage of war came rapid technological progress. The most significant weapon to emerge from the Second World War was the **nuclear bomb** that introduced the possibility of total destruction of the human race.

ABSURD STRUCTURE

It reflects the feeling that human experience has reached a dead-end. It does not adhere to the characteristics of a well-made play. Everything operates on a flat plain of equal significance. The form is either circular and repetitious or displays a declining spiral into futility. It is not concerned with the presentation of events as much as the presentation of individuals in a situation – to communicate their experience of existence. The Absurd does not adhere to the beginning/middle/end formula – no vertical plotting building towards a climax. Some absurd plays display a declining spiral structure moving into futility and dissolution. It presents individuals within a situation in such a way, as to communicate their experience of existence. The situation is full of activity – none of which changes the situation in the least.

ABSURD DIALOGUE

Language is not equipped to express knowledge or to define the meaningless. Rational language came to a dead end. It could not express the inexpressible. It has been reduced to making trivial statements. Language is irrelevant to existential problems. The use of circular and repetitious form communicates the lack of ontological meaning in life. Absurd theatre shows that language is not equipped to express knowledge or to define the meaningless.

Ionesco's language

Words, having no profound meaning, become interchangeable objects. Language is depersonalising and automatic. Language is irrelevant to existential problems. Ionesco derides language. He uses vacuous discussion about unimportant matters. His plays abound in nonsense phrases. He indulges in a meaningless association of words. Language often breaks down completely – climatic paroxysm. Ionesco uses language in a gestural manner – to express an idea by its total pattern or impact rather than its rational meaning. Language undermines itself.

Beckett's language

He used strong rhythmic progressions or canters. Frequent use of pause isolates words. Speech when silence becomes unbearable. Beckett relied on an imagistic impact rather than on logical structure. Created a poetic dialogue with melodic, rhythmic and associative potential.

THEMATIC CONCERNS

These plays present the author's intuition of the human condition. It is part of the movement that needed to break out of the narrow and detailed representational confines of naturalistic theatre. It displays an intense concern with the inner self that marked the dead end on the humanistic tradition. Man now finds himself in a world devoid of purpose. God, science, material progress – all seemed to have failed, leaving a vacuum filled with existential angst. Man seems to be lacking any sense of deep human purpose with which to fill the vacuum of self in a meaningless universe. Absurd theatre suggests an acceptance of the reality of human existence however harsh it may be. It advocates an accommodation of the truth of nothingness so that man may live positively with it. Dramatic forms attempted to mirror the fragmentation of contemporary life and reflect the search for meaning. Beckett conveys the experience of endless waiting and futility.

QUESTION 2 BRECHTIAN THEATRE

Brecht directed his alienation effect towards the breaking of empathy – empathy being the state of giving oneself up to the emotions of a theatrical occasion.

Write an essay with close reference to the Brechtian text that you studied this year to explain how Brecht achieved an alienation effect in his unique treatment of all the dramatic principles.

[50]

Assessment strategies

- Alienation as an influence on each of the dramatic principles must be foregrounded.
- The following information could be used as a guideline for the kind of information that should be addressed.
- Total marks for this question: 50 (5x10)
- Discuss all the dramatic principles with reference to the alienation techniques.
- No reference to a relevant text will be penalised with 20 marks.

The following information could be used as a guideline for the kind of information that should be addressed.

ALIENATION

The function of Brecht's theatre was political, and had to be viewed with a critical objectivity. Alienation, otherwise known as "distancing," and in German *Verfremdungseffekt*, is possibly the most important part of Brecht's dramatic theory. It is directly related both to the political intention of his theatre and to his sense of "Aristotelian" theatre. Brecht rejected the Aristotelian idea of a common humanity with a collective response to the emotions in a play – a human spirit, timeless and unchanging. Brecht did not reject the place of emotion in human life and in theatre. Nor did he exclude pleasure and entertainment as a function of theatre. But the pleasure was not to be gained through narcotic emotional self-indulgence. It was not emotion per se that Brecht excluded, but the empathy that it produces. The function of the effect is not, as has sometimes been interpreted, to attack or offend the audience. Brecht wants his audience to be at one with the event, in such a way that the interaction raises its critical consciousness. A critical attitude is not a negative one; it is socially active and practical. Alienation has the function of freeing socially conditioned phenomena from the stamp of familiarity. Alienation draws attention to the familiar by showing it in a new light.

EPISODIC STRUCTURE

Epic theatre employs a narrative not linked to time. It displays a loosely linked series of events – episodes. Brecht used the term *epic* for his theatre in the German sense of the word: a narrative not tied to time. It did not necessarily have the connotation of a heroic scale, but simply the idea of a loosely linked series of events. It moves in an episodic manner. While making a thematic whole, each episode of the epic is complete in itself, illustrating one specific aspect of the totality. The spectator can reflect upon this, as he is not anxious to press on to discover how the story ends. There is no story in a plot sense. Like Shakespeare, he used whatever suited his needs to create a nuclear form moving on several levels of time, space, and narrative at once. What resulted was a clear, coolly delineated chain of events presenting a body of evidence from which socio-political lessons might be drawn in a detached and lucid manner. The episodic structure, calculated to break the audience's emotional continuity and thus its empathy, had a strongly dialectical basis. The thesis-antithesis structure of an argument was present in the relationship of scenes.

HISTORIFICATION

Brecht insisted upon the historification of his theatre – the setting of its events in the past. This was again in the cause of alienation. Historification will shut off the conditioning forces of society and allow the audience to sit back and critically consider events placed in the past. However, these events will have significant connections with present circumstances. Alienation has the function of freeing socially conditioned phenomena from the stamp of familiarity. Alienation draws attention to the familiar by showing it in a new light.

GESTIC CHARACTERISATION

In epic theatre an actor will build his part from a social perspective. He is not looking for emotional, psychological, or metaphysical motivations for action, but for the social gist of his part. The actor must examine his part carefully to discover the political dialectics of the play, and the function his own character has in the presentation of the theme. Rather than try to develop an emotional persona for the character, or write up an imaginary biography of his past, an actor should make a skeletal outline of the events and action of the play and underline where his part fits in. Look for the socially determined insights and impulses and establish the modal points of the character's function in the story. Ask of the character: What happens to him? How does he respond? What opinions does he express and confront? The basis of physical characterisation is *gestus*. This is both a physical attitude and a point of view. The physicality embodies meaning in a precise, almost hieroglyphic way. The starting point is an external one, not arising from generalised aspects of human behaviour, but from those physical elements that will delineate a socio-political individual in a specific time, place, and class structure. Strongly defined body rhythms and centres of energy are fundamental to the delineation of character *gestus*.

COSTUME AND PROPERTIES

Though Brecht didn't operate on any kind of realistic premise in his use of space, he took extreme care that costumes and properties created the correct socio-economic impression. Simplicity and selectivity were, again, two principles on which he operated, but to these were added a strong functional and utilitarian sense. Brecht wished each scene, or episode, of his plays to have a basic tonal *gestus*. This developed with the play to underscore the total *gestus*, or thematic idea. Costumes had to show the evidence of wear, and the props were not realistic but in fact real. Brecht would have them made not by theatre technicians but by actual craftsmen, The simple, well-worn human artefact appealed to his sense of man's dignity and aspirations seen in a social and historical context. He was as careful over the correct use of properties as he was of the correct performance of work on stage: scenes of building, cooking, mending, and other basic human tasks had to be done with workmanlike accuracy. Work, the economic produce of labour, was, after all, at the basis of Marxist philosophy. Brecht's emphasis upon the correct detail of costuming and properties was due to their direct social and economic function within his theatre. As props and costumes relate so specifically to character, the way in which they are worn or used can make them part of a character's *gestus*.

THEMATIC CONCERNS

The Brechtian text and the Marxist Dialectic:

He was attracted to the dramatic appeal of the Hegelian dialectic:

- the coexistence of opposites,
- the merging of thesis and antithesis,
- the fact that order cannot be conceived without disorder.
- Dynamic ambiguity was for Brecht the ironic essence of drama.

He believed that content determined form.

Marxist art must be involved in the creation of a Socialist society – didactic plays. This provided the basis for his ideas on the objectivity of presentation or the “*Verfremdungseffekt*” (alienation). The function of Brecht's theatre was political; it had to be viewed with critical objectivity.

SPACE AND SETTING

The use of space both accommodates and reinforces the epic qualities of the plays. It allows for episodic change and a wide sweep of events – being essentially unlocalised and unspecific, after the tradition both of the medieval stage and the Elizabethan theatre. There is no attempt to create any realistic illusion. Everything about the staging is practical and utilitarian. These environments support the function of Brecht's theatre as an arena in which a dialectical action is fought out for the education of the spectators. In his conscious undermining of illusion Brecht did not attempt to disguise any of the theatrical apparatus of his stage. His lights were ungelled, and the instruments shown hanging on their pipes. Scaffolding was often employed rather than solid scenery. The whole use of scenic space advertised that this was not an imitation of life; this was a theatre, and one that was an intellectual workshop. The direct relationship among the epic form, the didactic intention, and the spatial dynamics of the theatre was reinforced by Brecht's use of screens, titles, projections, slides – all the technological paraphernalia of a scientific age. Items that today would be known as teaching aids are used by Brecht to serve the didactic purpose of his theatre. Breaking illusion meant, for Brecht, alienating emotional empathy to produce in the audience the critically engaged attitude of the student or of the spectator at a sporting event who is judging the quality of the play and the technical expertise of the players. The space is a classroom, the set is a teaching aid, and the actor is an instructor.

QUESTION 3 SOUTH AFRICAN THEATRE

***Sizwe Banzi* is about the hopeless journeys of blacks in a white-dominated society during the Apartheid era.**

Write an essay with reference to the South African play that you studied this year to show that an awareness of the prevailing socio-political situation becomes visible in the treatment of all the dramatic elements – structure, characterisation, dialogue, themes and space.

[50]

Background information: (Some of the SP info that could be integrated in a discussion of dramatic principles)

Historical events that are addressed by some South African plays (workshop, Protest) written especially after 1976 until the dismantling of the Apartheid System. This background information also applies to most of Athol Fugard's plays.

1. Apartheid

Some of the issues dealt with in plays that directly address the atrocities of Apartheid:

- The separation and isolation of people with laws that enforce inequality.
- Unjust laws: Group Areas Act, homelands policy separates and isolates
- Historical events: Sharpeville (1960) Soweto massacres (1976), the Crossroads conflict and Steve Biko's death
- **Pass book system: a black person needs a permit in order to work**
- Section 29 – police detention
- Detention without trial
- Appalling conditions in prisons
- Poor treatment of workers: no increases; no proper lunch breaks; exploitation with the threat of having their salary reduced, being laid off or being sent back to the homelands if they disobey which leads to strikes
- Police attacks on Soweto at night with dogs, stray bullets, roadblocks and tear gas
- Lack of equal opportunities for all South Africans
- Education denied to blacks
- Freedom of speech and association denied to blacks
- Fear of terrorism and communism
- Huge discrepancies in wealth between the rich and the poor
- Freedom fighters/resistance struggle put people on opposite sides

2. South African Protest Theatre

Theatre is used as a communication channel, to give oppressed people a voice. It attempts to bridge the barriers between people. (Apartheid)

Protest: shows the oppressor what has been happening to the oppressed.

Advocates resistance: asks oppressed to rise up and fight back. (Black Consciousness Movement)

Appeals to the conscience of the audience: makes them aware of rights/wrongs.

Entertains: very funny, satirical – while laughing, realise a point.

Satires: to criticise, expose, protest against and make fun of the Apartheid regime.

Attack on the Apartheid regime: a general indictment of the society that sustains it, rather than the blaming of specific individuals.

Comments on divided society in a society with a Black/White awareness.

Evokes an emotional response: makes us angry, sad, and ready to participate in action.

Enlightens and informs: provides information on unknown events.

This form of theatre emerged in S.A. in the 1970s.

It was first criticised by the Black Consciousness movement but after the '76 riots it became the dominant form of theatre by those opposed to Apartheid. Protest theatre was synonymous with "Black Theatre". It is essentially theatre against Apartheid and the evils thereof. For fifteen years (1976 – 1990) Black Theatre was concerned almost exclusively with a cultural call to arms. It makes use of repeated formula: people's recognition of their oppression through a clear assertion of how to emerge from this oppression. Play deals with essentially South African issues. It uses South African settings, South African characters, names and South African languages. It aims at South African audiences. It gave rise to Workshop Theatre. It is essentially participatory and communal in nature and deals with socio-political issues. It is based on democratic methods and was therefore, a most suitable method to be used in the struggle against the Apartheid regime.

One rubric (Woza Albert) provides an example of the basic assessment strategy to be applied in this question. This rubric has been devised for a workshopped Protest play and does not provide a model for all the plays that might be selected. It is, however, the play taught by most schools.

RUBRICS FOR WOZA ALBERT (AS AN EXAMPLE)

South African Structure

Episodic structure consists of a series of scenes linked together to present a thematic whole. Each episode displays linear structure – beginning, middle and end. Each episode addresses a particular topic. Scenes are of equal importance. Uses a repeated formula. Audience can focus on many different aspects of the theme as addressed in each episode. Uses links to join episodes – these may include music, songs, slogans, dances, mime, narrative dialogue, etc.

SP background

Black South Africans are suppressed by the Apartheid system

Protest theatre develops from an urgent need to express

- Suffering and discontent
- Criticism of the government
- Protestation on behalf of fellow oppressed citizens.

} Refer p 8, 9, 10

Created by using workshop techniques:

- Observation
- Improvisation
- Selection – scripting
- The Episodic nature of the plays shows an influence by Brecht or the structure of traditional oral tradition of storytelling e.g. Izinganekwane Zulu tradition.
- Scenes in the play are like stories, linked together.

CHARACTERISATION

Stylised, stereotypical, superficial. Relies on external and physical characterisation. Focus on voice and body of the actor. Actors play many parts in the course of the play. Emphasis on comic skills. It requires excellent performance skills, vocal dynamism and demanding physicality.

Performance demands or acting style:

Grotowski abandoned the concept of Rich (Realistic) Theatre as a reaction against the influence of television and related media. He felt that theatre had violated its own essence. Poor theatre focuses on the actor and his art – physicality and vocal range. It reacts against the use of elaborate costumes and make-up.

Influenced by the experimental work of Jerzy Grotowski

- Actor the essential element of theatre
- Trained and flexible body
- Wide range of vocal skills
- Capable of tremendous emotional involvement in role

Concerned with the interaction between oppressors and the oppressed as embodied in the Apartheid System

DIALOGUE

Style of speech reflects a history of violence, oppression, poverty and protest.

Multi-lingual elements. Crude slang and South African expressions. Dialogue bears evidence of storytelling technique (narration). Creation of oral sound effects and musical instruments demands vocal skills. Black humour is created with irony, satire, incongruity, colloquial phrases and mistaken identity.

Scenes are hard hitting and make use of strong visual images and symbolism. Dialogue reflects the multilingual society speaking a great variety of languages. The African oral tradition is reflected in narrated passages and stories. Protest is addressed against pass and other unjust laws. An emphasis is placed on vocal skills as advocated by Grotowski. Community-based theatre will tend to use the dominant language of the community, while more professional based theatre will need to make the dialogue more accessible to a wide range of people. Often characters will speak different languages as an outward sign of their cultural differences. Plays are made by the people for the people. Audience is involved as a necessary part of the process.

THEMES

Protest theatre set out to effect a change and create solidarity amongst black people. Awareness of the injustices of the Apartheid system is addressed. Seeks to promote action through an emotional response. Protest against the violation of human rights. Outcry against social injustices promoted by Apartheid. The plays comment on poor education. Ironic parallel treatment of Jesus and Morena's life experience. After 1976 it became an instrument of the **Black Consciousness Movement**. Marxist element – theatre can effect social and political change. Pass and other unjust laws passed by the Apartheid regime. Protest against the Apartheid system. Plays are made by the people for the people. Audience is involved as a necessary part of the process. Workshop Theatre's two-fold function: participation in the creative process by the actors and by the people who view the play. It makes use of repeated formula: people's recognition of their oppression through a clear assertion of how to emerge from this oppression. Play deals with essentially South African issues.

SPACE

Found space. Unlikeliest space to accommodate episodic structure. Rudimentary setting shows the influence of Grotowski. Rudimentary set is inexpensive and flexible. It constitutes quick scene changes and blackouts. Like Shakespearean Theatre it prompts the audience members to use their imagination. Sets rely on minimal financial support. No theatre facilities were available in black townships. The Group Areas Act prohibited mixed audiences and Black actors were not allowed to use theatres in White areas.

QUESTION 4 OWN CHOICE

Athol Fugard's intimacy with the theatre, his awareness of the analogies between one's life in the theatre and one's life as a citizen in the world, puts him in a class with Pinter, Albee and Brecht.

Write an essay on the own-choice play that you studied this year. Pay attention to the way in which the play connects the world in the play with the real world. Indicate how this is reflected in the way in which the dramatist uses the dramatic elements.

[50]

Assessment strategies:

- ∅ Refer to five dramatic principles.
- ∅ Each paragraph should refer to the theme of a socio-political event that connects the world of the play to the real world.

TOTAL FOR SECTION A: [150]

SECTION B
SPEECH

Answer BOTH questions in this section.

Total marks for this section – 30

QUESTION 5

Give a detailed description of how you used different resonators to achieve the desired resonance and explain, with reference to examples of text from one or more of your prepared pieces, how improved resonance contributed to your vocal quality, projection and characterisation.

[20]

Amplification and modification of the basic laryngeal tone, caused by the vibration of sound in the cavities and the sounding boards of the body

Weak sound waves created in the larynx pass into the pharynx and into the cavities of the mouth and nose, where the sound waves are lengthened and the voice is amplified and resonated. The vibrations then pass into the bones of the face and the skull travel down the spine and into the rest of the body.

Different size cavities create different resonating sounds. The vocal tract (pharynx, mouth, nasal passages, and sinuses) can be envisaged as a cavity, which will produce different resonating sounds when the size and shape of the cavity is varied.

Learning to adjust your vocal tract = essential in achieving a strong, rich resonant voice and in characterising

Each of the resonators is said to have a different quality therefore can be used for characterisation and for different tonal qualities.

The chest and pharynx resonates mellow, rich, warm tones.

The mouth is the most important, most adaptable resonating cavity. It changes size and shape to form individual speech sounds with different qualities. The sides of the mouth are soft and fleshy, creating mellow tones.

The nasal cavities add brightness and clarity; create nasal sounds when speaking with a French or American accent; assists with projection

The skull and bony mask of the face add brilliance of tone to very high notes and assist with projection

Must learn to shape the resonator, vary size of opening and vary surface texture of the resonator to characterise.

QUESTION 6

You have been appointed to conduct a voice warm-up for the Grade 12 drama class. Mention and substantiate at least THREE exercises that you would use. [10]

Assessment:

Learners could mention any THREE exercises relevant to voice or body warm-up.
[3x3+1=10] [30]

TOTAL FOR THIS SECTION B: [30]

**SECTION C
CREATIVE INTERPRETATION**

QUESTION 7

Discuss the steps that you would take to advertise a production of ONE of the plays that you prepared for this examination.

Assessment:

Discuss at least 2 of the following:

- Posters
- Flyers
- Press releases (10x2) or
- Use of other media. (4x5) [20]

TOTAL FOR SECTION C: [20]

TOTAL: 200