

AS LEVEL

Exemplar Candidate Work

DRAMA AND THEATRE

H059

For first teaching in 2016

Exemplar 6:

AS Level portfolio for a performance
of *Metamorphosis*

Version 1



Introduction

This work has been produced by Drama students as part of their school curriculum time, studying practitioners and performing from a text. It offers teachers an insight into how the process can be recorded by students in their research report and portfolio for Process to performance (Component 01/02/03/04).

As these responses have not been through moderation, an indication of the level of each response has not been included. A version of this resource which provides an indication of the level of the response will be made available in addition to this version in due course.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of an endorsed approach to creating a research report or portfolio.



EXEMPLAR CANDIDATE WORK 6

SAMPLE ANSWER

Metamorphosis

We created of text mimes of 4 morning actions and then we added simple self-narration of what we were doing along with doing it in the style of Berkoff, and so we had slight exaggeration in our movement. We then did Berkoff on text-the eating scene on page 97 of Metamorphosis. We applied total theatre-making everything count. We had to make sure that everything was specific and impeccably well-choreographed so that it's almost mechanical and we did this by looking through the cupboards in a specific way; opening the cupboards in an exaggerated way, and eating our food in a choreographed way which also helped us emphasis on physicality and mime, but I did not exaggerate to the extent of it being in the form of 'panto' exaggeration. We had no props and an empty space for our set which supports Berkoff's way of setting up a scene. We used large scale mime so that it was almost grotesque and so it was juxtaposed with minimal dialogue and sound effects, but the dialogue we did use was taken from the extract of the eating scene, and Gregor made very loud grotesque sound effects for him eating which supports Berkoff's way of using sound effects and dialogue.

When I explored the social context of the play, I focused on how Gregor's metamorphosis might be different in a modern today's society to link with a more understood subject. To make Gregor's metamorphosis more reverent to today's society, we chose that he should have an illness such as bipolar. This is because modern day society generally do not understand the disorder, much like the Samsa's do not understand Gregor's transformation. I represented this through Mr and Mrs Samsa's frustration with Gregor, and his rapidly changing moods and anger. This interpretation reflects the way society can react so some disorders that they do not understand, though the sufferer is not at fault for it. By representing the character of Greta, I could also explore how these conditions can affect the family as a whole: she was ignored during family scenes, and scared of what was happening to Gregor, though left largely responsible of his care.

On page 98, Berkoff uses the phrase 'ballet of the stools', and we interpreted what he could've meant by that. I interpreted it as Mr and Mrs Samsa's relationship, as they may become distant, I resembled this by moving the chairs away from each other, but they still love each other, I portrayed this by moving the chairs at the same time, and they always move back together. Also, the position at the start is the same position at the end, to show that the arguments and then forgiveness is an ever going reoccurring thing. Mrs Samsa is often backing away as she attempts to stand her ground and stick up for yourself and Gregor, and she is able to say how she feels, but she finds it hard to stand her ground when Mr Samsa gets angry at her and intimidates her as he always has to be the dominant partner and doesn't like it when she rebels, which is why she moves away from him, isn't of her staying still and actually standing her ground when he walks sharply towards her.

We read Gregor's monologue on page 117. Berkoff wrote it in a very particular and sophisticated way because he tried to show that even though Gregor's life has changed because of his metamorphosis, he is still intelligent and he has only changed physically. I rewrote the monologue into a simpler piece, to connect with the way Gregor might talk as though he is a beetle, but I strayed from the sophisticated language that Berkoff wrote. So instead of saying "stop playing, spit at these intruders, Greta – only play for me" to something much more simple to resemble the way Gregor's metamorphosis has changed him in more than just a physical way; I changed it to 'stop it! Hit these idiots Greta! Don't play for anyone but me!' By doing this I think that I've achieved making Gregor seem more like an animal rather than a human. The language I have used is somewhat like the language Mr Samsa uses, and so it is showing that Mr Samsa is much more of an animal than a human, and that he and Mrs Samsa and Greta are the people who went through a metamorphosis into cold hearted angry people.

I devised 3 still images showing Gregor's emotional state in the 3 stages of his transformation. My posture was arched throughout all of the still images to show that he has always been a little closed off even from the beginning. My facial expressions helped me portray how Gregor was feeling—they were very dull and lifeless, as I found that Gregor never felt happy. In my second still image I wanted to interpret Gregor as tense and frustrated, as he is being neglected at this stage, so my eyes were much angrier but there was also sadness, and I feel as though I succeed in my aim of interpretation. The levels of tension were much higher on the second still image as Gregor was going through a great amount of pain during this transition and so I was trying to feel this amount of pain with high levels of tension. For my third still image I looked down to the floor because the transformation is complete and he is again thoughtful and I feel that that is best captured through the eyes, there is also a sense of relief as Gregor is finally free. The levels of tension went back down to the same as the first still image as Gregor is no longer in any physical pain as the transition is over and so I tried to create distorted body language but I used my facial expression to show that it wasn't uncomfortable.

When interpreting the whole play, I decided to focus on how I used my voice when I was multi rolling to distinguish the different characters. For instance, when playing Mrs Samsa, I had a soft tone and a higher pitched voice to show how sensitive she was,

contrasting to when I played Mr Samsa who is much more aggressive, to achieve my interpretation of him, I used a lower pitch and a much harsher tone. Greta was the easiest to interpret, as she had a very high pitch and very playful voice. Although all these characters have contrasting voices, when we were surrounding Gregor asking for our needs; 'clothes', 'food' and 'money', we all spoke in the same monotone voice, to show my interpretation that even though they are all completely different, when it comes to demanding things from Gregor, they are all the same.

In exploring the exposition to *Metamorphosis*, we looked at the first scene of the play and performed it using shadows. In my group, we decided to focus on the visual aspect. I wanted to capture the audience through what they were which is why we used a lot of shadows as it had a visual effect on Gregor; his elbows become extremely pointy and his neck was elongated; it represented the distorted image of Gregor as a dung beetle. I created the whole family using shadows at the start; having Gregor walk forward swaying side to side showing his tiredness, Greta jump in behind Gregor waving to show her innocence and childlike behaviour, Mr Samsa walk in drinking to resemble the drunkenness and laziness, and finally Mrs Samsa ironing to show that she is caring and attempts to look after her family. We then attempted to then create the dung beetle uses all of our bodies after going in canon to represent the transformation that he went through. Throughout our whole performance Gregor stayed behind the screen to maintain his distorted image of the beetle while only the family came out to speak, we did this because the image of Gregor's transformation never gets lost or forgotten, it only gets worse. And while the family come out they stand very straight with no character to them as throughout Gregor's metamorphosis, they go through one as well were they turn cold hearted and lose all feelings but hatred towards Gregor and then went back to recreate the image of the beetle to show what the full metamorphosis would look like.

I focused on non-verbal communication. I focused on the character of Mrs Samsa after Mr Samsa said that she can't see Gregor anymore, I wanted to think about how she would come into the room and sit down. As I came in, I was walking with my head down and having my hands in front of my body and fiddling with my fingers to show closed body language. I was walking at a slow pace to represent how timid Mrs Samsa is and to demonstration that she was very thoughtful at that current time. As I sat down I looked ahead but lowering my head slightly so I wasn't making any eye contact with the audience, as at this time she was feeling angry at Mr Samsa, and distraught because she couldn't see her son, and confused and torn on what the right thing to do would be. I also had my back arched to maintain the idea that Mrs Samsa is closed off and may feel that she has no one to share her thoughts with. When I was not speaking and waiting for a question, I had my hands on my lap and fiddled with my fingers to display how nervous Ms Samsa was about speaking ill of her own husband. Throughout this task, I had my gestus as me fiddling with my fingers as I feel it represents a character who is nervous and uncomfortable.



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