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Candidate Style Answers

DRAMA AND THEATRE

H459/31
For first teaching in 2016

Q2 Level 3 – sample answer with commentary: Black Watch

Version 1

www.ocr.org.uk/drama

INTRODUCTION

This resource has been produced by the A Level Drama and Theatre assessor team to offer teachers an insight into how the assessment objectives are applied.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

The sample assessment material for this answer and commentary can be found on the A Level Drama and Theatre web page here: http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/242806-unit-h459-31-analysing-characters-for-performance-sample-assessment-material.pdf

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SECTION A QUESTION 2

Discuss how conflict could be heightened through the use of props and set design. Justify your ideas with examples from at least three scenes of the performance text you have chosen for this question. **[15]**

At the start of your answer write the name of the performance text you have chosen. Choose 1 of the following:

Theme 1: Conflict

Hamlet – William Shakespeare

Black Watch – Gregory Burke

Necessary Targets – Eve Ensler

The Long and the Short and the Tall – Willis Hall

Oh What a Lovely War – Joan Littlewood

SAMPLE ANSWER

The props in Black Watch are not always what they appear to be and have symbolic meaning when exploring the idea of conflict.

For example, the pool table in the pub has to split open and from this table two soldiers have to appear dressed in their combat clothes. This prop will instantly show the juxtaposition of the life of the soldiers back home in the pub and how this is invaded by their flashbacks to their time in Iraq. The past invades the present.

A radio on set would also be a useful prop in this first scene to help show the idea of conflict. For example, in Scene One we hear an extract from the Today programme where the presenter is setting the scene for the audience and talking about the death of some members of Black Watch. The radio demonstrates the distance we, the public, have from this conflict and how we only hear stories about the deaths of soldiers. It doesn't mean much to us. When it's heard on a radio, we don't even see their faces. However, the volume could be loud and uncomfortable to show the idea that we can't get away from it and it's not easy listening.

Props could also be used to show the conditions that Black Watch face when they are actually in Iraq. In the scene entitled 'New Boys' Fraz gets a bottle of water and offers one to Cammy. Cammy refuses and Fraz comments on the water, saying it's not Evian. It seems that the soldiers, whilst involved in the conflict, face poor conditions. The water should look almost dirty and the bottle should be in poor condition, perhaps with no label. Likewise, Cammy's book that he is reading could look battered and well-read. The soldiers don't have new items to enjoy or luxuries. This is the reality of the conflict.

The Scene Pub 2 contains an important and symbolic prop when exploring the theme of conflict. When Lord Elgin enters, he places a sword on the table in the pub. He says it is the 'sword of my ancestor...the sword of Robert the Bruce.' He then raises the sword above his head and asks 'wha'll follow a Bruce.' To Elgin, this sword has represented the glory in battle and the patriotism of using it in conflict to defend your country. It needs to look historical and old - Elgin represents a very dated view (from World War 1) of what conflict is. It should look like an impressive historical item, expensive and perhaps could be gleaming and shiny; it is being used to present a false picture of conflict and war and as a symbol of how men, throughout history, were persuaded or enticed to serve their country with false promises of glory in recruiting rallies. The sword, like the pool table, has to be a prop which shows how the past invades the present.

Level 3

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Commentary

The essay refers to three different scenes in relation to props and the idea of conflict. The candidate is able to explore the symbolism of the props used in relation to the theme of conflict. A basic argument and line of reasoning is given. There is knowledge and understanding of how meaning can be created through the details or the use of a prop including reference to the sword, bottle of water, radio and pool table. These examples are appropriate if not analysed in depth.

Improvements

There is a need for the development of the argument – more depth is required with focused creative decisions to convey meaning.

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