

International Advanced Level English Literature

Unit 2: Drama

Exemplar Scripts and Commentaries

January 2024 Series





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Introduction

- The purpose of this pack is to provide teachers and students with some examples of responses to International Advanced Level English Literature Unit 2: Drama.
- The responses in this pack were taken from the January 2024 examination series. The question papers and mark schemes can be found on the Pearson website [here](#).
- In this pack you will find a sample of responses, examiner commentaries and marks.
- If you have any enquiries regarding these materials or have any other questions about the course, please contact our English subject advisor on teachingenglish@pearson.com



Overview

Section A requires the analysis of a studied drama text from pre-1900; Section B requires the analysis of a text from the post-1900 period. In each section there are five texts to choose from and the learners select one of two questions on their chosen plays.

The personal response of the learner to the question (AO1) and to the dramatist's craft (AO2) is expected to be supplemented by a demonstration of knowledge and understanding of our variety of critical interpretations of the text (AO5) and relevant contextual details (AO3).

Depending on the specific focus of the question, critical interpretations might include reviews of productions in books or periodical publications (contemporary or modern), critical analysis by academic literary scholars, historical evidence of reader/viewer responses and the aesthetic choices made by actors and directors. Answers which recognise ambiguity in texts and recognise different potential interpretations will also be rewarded in AO5 so long as the interpretations are relevant to the specific question focus. Relevant contexts for consideration might include socio-historical information, intellectual history, genetic conventions, biographical details and staging history.

Performance in January 2024 suggests that learners should focus on the plays as literary constructs and avoid discussing characters as if they were real people. It is also important to consider the dramatist's purpose and remember that these texts were written to be performed. Finally, while most learners were able to make clear reference to contextual points, the most successful were those who could embed that knowledge and could reflect on how context illuminates the key ideas of a text.



Section A: Pre-1900 Drama

Question 5

In this question learners were asked to explore Shakespeare's presentation of desire in *Twelfth Night* in the light of the statement: 'A play where desire is proven to be unruly, showing little regard for society's rules and boundaries'.

Script 1, Question 5

Shakespeare's presentation of desire in *Twelfth Night*, is being represented through characters love for each other. Shakespeare explores the theme of love in this comedic play of *Twelfth Night*. The theme of love closely plays around the theme of desire.

~~Over~~ Throughout the ~~entire~~ play, Shakespeare explores the the consequences of following love blindly, ~~with~~ while expressing to the audience how love can make a person commit dangerous act's in the ~~as~~ name of love. Shakespeare's character's explore desire to be wanted and loved is heavily expressed in the play. In ~~Act~~ ACT one, Scene one, Duke Orsino expresses his desire and love for Olivia, he says. "When mine eyes did see Olivia first, Methought



she purged the air of pestilence! that instant was I turn'd into a hart; And my desires, like fell and cruel hands, E'er since pursue me." From this speech, we can deduce Duke Orsino's unquenchable desire for Lady Olivia is as 'cruel hands' which 'pursue' him. From this scenario we can understand Shakespeare first introduction to the theme of desire.

Not all of Shakespeare's character display this feeling of desire romantically. ~~the~~ The character of Viola finds out that her twin brother 'Sebastian', has survived the unfortunate crash at sea. Viola's desire to reunite with her siblings further strengthens the theme of desire.

Shakespeare also explores Malvolio's desire to ~~be~~ marry Lady Olivia, who is at a higher class structure than himself. The character of Malvolio is displayed as pretentious and rude. During Malvolio's interaction towards anyone of a lower-class than of Lady Olivia, he is very rude and alludes himself as a high-class man ready to ~~mar~~ marry Lady Olivia in-order to receive the wealth and fame.



In Act II, Scene V, when Malvolio reads the letter given to him, written by the fake Lady Olivia, he is overjoyed and extatic, that Lady Olivia ~~wants~~ is interested in Malvolio. While Malvolio foolishly falls for the servants' trap, without giving a second thought about such an idea. Here Shakespeare explores Malvolio's character, of how his own desire's alluded him into believing a fake love letter. But this also befits the overall theme of Twelfth Night, 'love'. By creating a scenario where the antagonist is vulnerable to the person he desires to be with, creates an understanding of how Shakespeare show the ~~full~~ desire and consequence of love. Another character that displays the the theme of desire very prominently is Lady Olivia. Shakespeare introduces Lady Olivia as a mourning women, who has lost two of the people she loved the most and throughout the rising plot of the play Olivia finds new love, in order to fill that desire of



being loved. Shakespeare explores ~~Olivia's~~ Lady Olivia's character as beautiful and smart noble. Throughout the story of Twelfth Night, Shakespeare explores the very eminent difference in class, and the class difference between the servant's, Cesario, Antonio and those of higher nobility like Duke Orsino and Lady Olivia. ~~During~~ The class difference, leads to the characters having different outlooks and ~~an~~ opinion of desire. While most of the characters desire to love or be loved, ~~some~~ ^{some} of them desire for more personal desires to take place.

Shakespeare draws out the personality and characteristics of each character to bring this wanted and eager attention by the audience / readers. By exploring the topsy-turvy world of Twelfth Night, it brings comedic ~~and~~ relief to the readers in order to engage them. Shakespeare's inclusion of the theme of desire directly holds connection to the character's actions in the play. Which has ~~has~~ an impact on the play's plot and shift.



Examiner comment and mark

The learner interprets the question in a number of valid ways, but it would perhaps have been better to have spent more time on fewer ideas.

The response begins by equating 'desire' (the topic of the question) with love. This straightforward approach tends to suggest that the learner is not going to be discriminating in their understanding of different potential interpretations (AO5).

In terms of AO2, there is a great deal of description at the expense of analysis of the writer at work. However, there are flashes of insight into the writer's craft. For example:

'In Act II scene V when Malvolio reads the letter given to him, written by the fake Lady Olivia, he is overjoyed and ecstatic that Lady Olivia is interested in Malvolio, while Malvolio foolishly falls for the servant's trap without giving a second thought about such an idea. Here Shakespeare explores Malvolio's character of how his own desires alluded him into believing a fake love letter, but this also befits the overall theme of Twelfth Night, 'love'. By creating a scenario where the antagonist is vulnerable to the person he desires to be with, creates an understanding of how Shakespeare shows desire and consequence of love.'

Some awareness of context (AO3) is demonstrated, but comment tends to be general, e.g., 'Throughout the story of Twelfth Night, Shakespeare explores the very eminent difference in class, the class differences between the servant's, Cesario, Antonio and those of higher nobility like Duke Orsino and Lady Olivia. The class difference leads to the characters having different outlooks and opinions of desire. While most of the characters desire to love or be loved, some of them desire for more personal desires to take place'.

Overall, this response certainly met all the criteria of Level 2 but that there was also some evidence of clear engagement and straightforward understanding of the writer's purpose. Just into Level 3.

Level 3, 11 marks



Question 9

In this question candidates were asked to explore Shakespeare's presentation of virtue in *Othello* in the light of the statement: '*Othello* depicts a world where characters pay the price for being virtuous'.

Script 2, Question 9

Plan: virtuous → characters do pay the price but ultimately none of them are perfectly virtuous eg:

- D disobeys her father "let me go w/ him"
- O falls victim to jealousy as does Iago - virtue is always tampered with by external sources
- Emilia obeys her husband - ruins her virtue.
↓ "I know not modern."
- Konigmann: "D as non-herald." "E as dim-witted or afraid."
- R. Woodell: "D goes against the expectations of ~~her~~ her sex."
- Anir Loahba: "O becomes a ~~fall~~ victim of racial beliefs precisely bc. he becomes an agent of m. en."
- ~~Robert~~ Valerie Treff: Othello becomes very confused & insecure bc. of Iago's influence - negative commentary on

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Q 9.

In Shakespeare's tragedy, 'Othello', virtue is widely discussed and is presented as a glorified characteristic which is highly honoured and praised in theory, yet in practice, it is virtually impossible to fully achieve. Hence, the characters that ~~would~~ could be argued to be the 'most virtuous',* do 'pay the price', in the form of merciless, unjust punishments and ultimately death. However, it is debatable to assert that said punishments stem from their virtue given that each character commits errors of judgement, or ~~acts outside of the~~ ~~expectations~~ such as Emilia's theft of the handkerchief, or ~~acts~~ against the expectations of their role in society, as does Desdemona.

~~Desdemona's virtue is consistently praised throughout the play, such as through her commitment to act always~~
~~and Emilia's persona is a prime example of punishment~~
~~for being virtuous, as it is the nearest to virtue~~
Whilst Emilia is a prime example of punishment merely for being virtuous, her virtue is inconsistent as she behaves ~~immorally~~ immorally and dishonestly in betraying her 'mistress'. Hence, ~~that~~ she is punished for being virtuous in attempting

* such as Desdemona, or Emilia when ~~attempting~~ ^{choosing} to be honest,



to reveal the truth about her husband's malicious acts: "All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak", largely because she plays a large role in making said acts possible. Penny Clay argues that ~~against~~ the handing over of the handkerchief is a "catalyst for the play's tragedy", hence, in being the an agent of said catalyst, Emilia's virtue is tainted, leading to her punishment. However, whilst the consequences of Emilia's actions are dire, many critics critique Emilia for taking the handkerchief, such as Honigmann's ~~comment~~ labelling of her as "dim-witted" and A. C. Bradley's assertion that "handing over the napkin was merely stupidity". Whilst this perspective can be argued, a new-historicist reading would suggest that Emilia's actions are merely a product of the misogyny in the Jacobean era - women were expected to be obedient and to serve their fathers and husbands: Emilia explicitly states that she "nothing but to please his fantasy". Whether this is out fear or out of a sense of obligation, Emilia still loses her virtue arguably due to societal expectations and unfortunate circumstance, suggesting that regardless of the ~~ext~~ extent of her virtue, it will be tainted one way or another, and that is how she will 'pay for'.

~~About~~ Unlike Emilia, Desdemona always remarkable virtue continuously throughout the play: she is always honest and true to her own beliefs, ~~and~~ ^{yet} much like Emilia,



She arguably receives the most punishment of all: murder based on a false accusation. However, Desdemona's punishment may indeed be rooted in the extent of her virtue, as through her endless attempts to help Cassio return to his position as lieutenant, she creates greater suspicion for Othello. In fact, it is ~~arguable that~~ can be said that it is as a result of Desdemona's persisting virtue that Othello's initial mental/psychological decline can be witnessed - compared to his composed, eloquent speech in blank verse at the start of the play, when Desdemona "[prays him]" to "let Cassio be received again" he can only produce fragmented, exclamatory and strange commentary in the form of shouting "The Moor's kinsman!".

~~Further~~ Furthermore whilst Desdemona's punishment may be the result of her overt virtue, it can also be argued that her primary error of judgment was, as said by critic R. Woodall, "[going] against the expectations of her sex", which can be argued is the sense that Desdemona is presented as very feminine, and even states "What'er you be, I am obedient," presenting her as the epitome of a perfect Victorian woman, she does "decide her father in marrying [Othello]," which supports Woodall's argument given that women were expected to ^{well as} blindly obey their fathers ^{or} their husbands. Hence, ^{perhaps} in challenging the expectations of her sex, Desdemona's virtue is tainted, and Shakespeare's choice to have Desdemona



murdered may be to expect that any behaviour outside of what is expected, is likely to be punished.

Ultimately, whilst it can be argued that virtue is punished for in Shakespeare's tragedy, 'Othello', primarily in the case of Emilia and Desdemona. It can also be observed that neither of the two women meet the standards of virtue and perfection that they are expected to by the Jacobean society, making their virtue tainted and imperfect, leading to the conclusion that ~~virtue~~ their virtue is not what leads them to their demise, but ~~it~~ instead it is their lack of virtue or obedience that ultimately makes their survival impossible.

* She further proves this through her ~~imperative~~ demand made to her father: "Let me go with him", ~~in which it ended~~ and imperative - something unexpected from the supposed "superstitious venition."

Examiner comment and mark

This is a highly effective response. The sophisticated and evaluative approach in the opening paragraph is sustained throughout.

In terms of AO5, there is some excellent use of critical ideas to support the candidate's own argument:

'...Penny Gray argues that the handing over of the handkerchief is a "catalyst for the play's tragedy", hence, in being an agent of said catalyst, Emilia's virtue is tainted, leading to her punishment. However, whilst the consequences of Emilia's actions are dire, many critics critique Emilia for taking the handkerchief, such as Honigman's labelling of her as "dim-witted" and AC Bradley's assertion that "handing over the napkin was merely stupidity". Whilst this perspective can be argued, a new-historicist reading would suggest that Emilia's actions are a product of the misogyny. In the Jacobean era women were expected to be obedient and to serve their fathers and husbands: Emilia explicitly states that she "nothing but to please his fantasy". Whether this is out of fear or out of a sense of obligation,



Emelia still loses her virtue arguably due to societal expectations and unfortunate circumstance, suggesting that regardless of the extent of her virtue, it will be tainted one way or another and that it was what she will pay for.'

There is also sophisticated embedding of contextual reference (AO3) linking critical and social contexts clearly to the text and to the topic of the question:

'...the sense that Desdemona is presented as very feminine and even states "Whatever you be, I am obedient" presenting her as the epitome of a perfect Jacobean woman. She does "deceive her father" in marrying Othello, which supports Woodall's argument given that women were expected to blindly obey their fathers as well as their husbands. She further proves this through her demand made to her father, "Let me go with him." which is end stopped and imperative, something unexpected from the supposed "supersubtle Venetian". Hence perhaps in challenging the expectations of her sex, Desdemona's virtue is tainted and Shakespeare's choice to have Desdemona murdered may be to express that any behaviour outside of what is expected is likely to be punished.'

A relative weakness of the response is the limited reference to the crafting of the text (AO2) despite evidence of sophisticated understanding of the writer's purpose. For this reason, the mark awarded is towards the bottom of Level 5.

Level 5, 22 marks



Question 10

In this question learners were asked to explore how Shakespeare uses the character of Cassio in *Othello* in the light of the statement: 'Cassio is more than just a plot device; he illuminates the key ideas of the play'.

Script 3, Question 10

plan:

Loss of reputation

manipulated too

treatment of Bianca

Love for Othello

~~Othello~~

'Othello' is a ~~badly~~ tragedy written by William Shakespeare set in Venice and Cyprus.

Cassio is a character that is used to highlight the importance of reputation, ~~he~~ and the treatment of women. He also demonstrates that anyone is vulnerable to being manipulated as well as displaying love for Othello. He also shows that a tragedy does not end badly for everyone involved.

One of the most prominent scenes for the character of Cassio is in Act Two, Scene ~~Two~~ Three. This can be seen as he



downfall for his character. In Elizabethan times, reputation was of the utmost importance.

One's reputation determined their place in society which needed to be continuously upheld to maintain ~~admired~~ ^{admired} and respected.

Walker describes Cassio as someone to be 'admitted for his loyalty and steadiness' further implying that Cassio is a character who is well-liked

by the audience. As a result of this view on Cassio, when he loses his reputation the audience feels sympathy towards him, especially since he was manipulated. Cassio's outpour 'Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation!

I have lost the immortal part of myself and what remains is bestial' shows the importance society placed on this. The triplet 'reputation reputation, reputation' suggest that Cassio cannot believe what he has done. Furthermore the use of the double exclamation

~~reputation~~ enhances this idea of disbelief.

Lastly, the idea that he is now 'bestial'

shows that the Elizabethan Society regarded reputation as a human quality,

• ~~separate~~ separation between man and



animal. Cassio now having lost this human quality is only able to see himself now as a mere beast. Shakespeare uses Cassio to highlight to the audience that ~~the~~ reputation should be cherished and ~~maintained~~ maintained because it can be lost.

Cassio is also used to show the treatment of women. Traub suggests that women were categorised into 4 ~~parts~~ ^{roles}; virgin, widow, wife or whore'. Through Cassio, the audience is able to see how women treated due to the position they held in society. As Othello's wife, Cassio treats Desdemona with nothing but respect. He calls her the 'divine Desdemona'. This alliteration emphasises Cassio's respect for her, almost as if he admires her. However, when it comes to Bianca, he ~~courtessan~~ courtesan, this respect does not continue. He even finds the idea of marrying her laughable, 'I marry her? What, a customer? ... Ha, ha, ha.' The rhetorical questions emphasise the point that even the notion of marriage is deemed ridiculous by Cassio. This comes down ~~to~~ to the fact



that Elizabethan society would've classified her as a 'whore' by Frank's theory. As a result of this she is seen as an object and not seen as someone who deserves respect. This is different to ~~Desdemona~~ Desdemona as she is a 'wife' ~~to~~ therefore holding a higher status, thus Cassio being a gentleman. ~~Shakespeare~~ Shakespeare uses Cassio as a tool to portray the different ways men will ~~to~~ treat women as a result of their place in society.

Although Othello is the main character which Iago manipulates, he is not ~~also~~ ~~the~~ the only one. Cassio too is manipulated. A.C Bradley suggests that Othello is 'ruthlessly manipulated by Iago' but what Bradley fails to recognize is that so is Cassio.

Bradley disregards Cassio in this ~~see~~ sense.

Due to Iago's manipulations ~~and~~ ~~in~~ Cassio loses his reputation and merit with Othello. A.C. Bradley further suggests that ~~due to~~ ~~frustration~~ Iago is 'frustrated due to repeatedly being overlooked in life which is why Iago manipulates Cassio. In this regard Cassio too becomes a victim of



Iago's naivice, even though Cassio didn't do anything wrong. ~~In this regard~~ This ^{allows} ~~allows~~ Shakespeare to present the idea that ^{any} a person can be manipulated and deceived ~~despite doing anything wrong~~. It sets up the narrative that Cassio is not at fault for being manipulated, yet he does ~~stop~~ suffer the consequences of this. It allows the audience to identify that anyone is vulnerable. This ^{theory} applies to both a modern and contemporary audience.

Cassio is also used to demonstrate racism. ~~Explain~~ Although Cassio is loyal to Othello, he still upholds Elizabethan societal values of being racist towards him. 'Although Cassio displays great ~~earn~~ concern over Othello's whereabouts, 'may he bless this bay with his tall ship' suggesting Othello's arrival is beneficial and important, Cassio still refers to him as 'the Moor'. In this case Cassio presents the theme of subtle racism in Othello as Othello is not referred to ~~as~~ ~~as~~ by name but as 'Moor'. It implies the idea



that society viewed black people as other to him. This is reinstated through Cassio, as he is a gentleman ~~and~~ who holds Othello in a high regard, yet uses racial slurs. It allows for a divide to be set ~~up~~ up between Othello and Cassio which suggests Cassio's superiority regardless of ~~the~~ the fact that Othello is his boss.

As 'Othello' can be classified as a tragedy as the play ends in death of the protagonist. ~~So~~ Shakespeare uses Cassio to show that good can come from tragic events. Like stated ~~earlier~~ earlier Walker describes Cassio as someone to be ~~is~~ 'admired' however, due to manipulation this idea is lost. Yet by ~~the~~ the end of the play this is ~~in~~ reinstated as Cassio receives ~~the~~ the happy end he truly deserves. Lodovico announces Cassio as 'governor' highlighting a happy ending for his character. Having Cassio receive this status allows for Cassio to have a redemption arc after his past failing. It shows the audience



~~that~~ that perseverance is ~~it~~ important.

While also showing that good intentions will be rewarded. It is just a matter of time.

Overall, Cassio is far more than just a plot device. Shakespeare represents the ^{key} ~~key~~ themes of ~~honor~~ honour, reputation and manipulation in his character. But, also demonstrates ~~that~~ various treatments of women and how anyone has the ability to be racist. ~~The audience is able to learn from Cassio in the idea that good~~

Examiner comment and mark

Although there is some insecurity in expression, this is a generally well-controlled response with the learner demonstrating consistent awareness of a dramatist at work. There is also a sustained awareness of the text as a piece of drama to be performed for an audience – something not all learners bear in mind on this paper. The response is probably a little too long, and it rather descends into a list form towards the end, e.g., 'Cassio is used for this...Cassio is used for this' and so on, but the approach is consistently discriminating.

In terms of AO2 there is a clear sense of Cassio and other characters as dramatic constructs, e.g. 'Although Cassio displays great concern over Othello's whereabouts, 'May he bless this bay with his tall ship', suggesting Othello's arrival to be beneficial and important, Cassio still refers to him as 'the Moor'. In this case Cassio presents the theme of subtle racism in 'Othello' as Othello is not referred to by name, but as 'Moor'. It implies the idea that society viewed black people as other to them. This is reinstated through Cassio as he is a gentleman who holds Othello in a high regard yet uses racial slurs. It allows for a divide to be set up between Othello and Cassio which suggests Cassio's superiority, although Othello is his boss.' The learner throughout makes sustained and pertinent reference to the text.



The response also shows knowledge and understanding of contexts (AO3), particularly in relation to the importance of 'reputation' and the treatment of women. There is some discrimination shown here, but points made are not developed in sufficient detail to reach the higher marks at Level 4.

The candidate has clearly demonstrated to integrate engagement with critical ideas (AO5) very well and used these to further their own argument, e.g., Traub's categorisation of women, Bradley's comments on the manipulation of Othello. Again, the discussion is not characterised by the sophistication required for Level 5 on this assessment objective, but exploration of the different interpretations is developed.

Overall, it was felt that this response sits comfortably in Level 4.

Level 4, 18 marks



Section B: Post-1900 Drama

Question 17

In this question candidates were asked to explore Williams' presentation of deception in *A Streetcar Named Desire* in the light of the statement: 'In *A Streetcar Named Desire* the only character Blanches succeeds in deceiving is herself'.

Script 1, Question 17

In his play 'A Streetcar Named Desire' Tennessee Williams explores the idea of deception through many ways such as the use of props, the language used by the characters, the sound and music effects as well as symbolism. Williams explores deception mostly through his character Blanche in order to explore the ideas of how deception can merge together the borders between reality and illusion which can lead to the loss of sanity.

Throughout the whole play ~~Blanche~~ Williams represents Blanche as an ~~extra~~ eccentric 'Southern Belle' who seems to constantly lie or hide the truth from others. One of the ways Williams does so is through the use of various props in the play such as the clothes Blanche wears. From the very beginning of the play the clothes that Blanche wore symbolized different emotional and physical states that Blanche was in. In the very beginning of the play Blanche looked 'incongruous' to the setting of the Elysian Fields, wearing a white suit with a fluffy bodice, ~~necklace~~ pearl necklace and earrings, white gloves and a hat, her dainty look



and white outfit were a way for Blanche to cover up her scandalous past. White as a colour symbolizes innocence, purity and virginity which contrasted with the mood after the war that both the play was ~~set~~^{set} in and when Williams wrote. We can notice that as the play progresses the style and colour of Blanche's clothes correlate with the discovery of Blanche's secrets and ~~the~~ her mental state as all of her lies unravel. In scene ~~to~~ nine when Blanche is confronted by Mitch ^{about} ~~on~~ her sexual and scandalous past she is wearing a scarlet satin robe, red being a symbol for passion, sex and freedom, as if Blanche is finally ready to accept her truth and acknowledge her past ~~truth~~ which she does ~~when the ~~family~~ doesn't do~~ which she ultimately doesn't do. Another significant clothing that Blanche signifies that ends the end of her deception is the 'crumpled' and 'spoiled' white dress she wore in scene 10 which symbolised that all of the innocence that Blanche portrayed is now ruined and spoiled just like her dress. The use of Blanche's clothes in this play helps Williams convey the slow ruin of all the deception that Blanche has caused in a more symbolic way to the audience which also helped them follow the journey of Blanche's slow descent into madness.

Another use of prop that ~~it is~~ Williams uses in order to represent Blanche's deception is through the use of the Chinese paper lantern that Blanche covers the light



with. The lantern covering the light represents Blanche trying to cover up the truth ~~from~~ about herself as the light would cover ~~her~~ her appearance making her age visible and ~~the~~ dismantling the romantic light that she so desperately tries to portray herself in. In scene nine when Blanche ~~tries to~~ is confronted by Mitch he says that he has never seen her 'in the light' as in he has never seen her in her truth and proceeds to rip the paper lantern off symbolising him finally ~~making them~~ seeing the truth that Blanche tried to cover and shield her face from. ~~The paper~~ ~~At the play ends~~ ~~The audience can~~ The dramatism and the significance of the lantern let the audience feel the climactic importance of the scene as they too see Blanche in the light and can feel the same feeling of anxiety as Blanche finally has to confront the reality.

All throughout the play the music and sound effects accompany the audience and symbolize different aspects of the play. One of the most important tunes being the 'Varsouviana' polka that is often heard whenever Blanche thinks or reminisce about her past. The 'Varsouviana' represents Blanche's guilt about Allan Grey and his death as the tune was ~~the~~ played during the time he shot himself. In the end



of the play Blanche cannot distinguish ~~the~~ whether the polka tune is real or not ~~it~~ which symbolizes Blanche's descent into madness and her finally losing herself to her own lies and losing the touch with reality.

In the end Blanche's lies have been uncovered by everyone, her past known to everyone and only she herself is now the only one who believes those lies. As the play finishes with Blanche being institutionalised the audience is split into two. One part believing that Blanche deserved the tragic ending that she got for trying to deceive everyone, another part believing that Blanche was a victim of the societal ~~stand~~ standards pressured onto women in the 1940's in America and that all of her attempts of deceit have been nothing more than her trying to survive in this patriarchal world.

Examiner comment and mark

Engagement with the dramatist's craft (A02) is the strength of this response and the learner has approached the question in a well-organised way, structuring his/her paragraphs around the various techniques used by Williams, e.g. the detailed analysis of the symbolic significance of Blanche's clothing in the opening scene and in the scenes with Mitch and Stanley; the importance of the paper lantern prop; Williams' use of music and sound effects. All of this discussion is linked back to the topic of the question - deception.

The response as a whole feels a little narrow. The focus is solely on Blanche and, although this is a valid approach, one feels that a broader range of reference would have allowed the learner to show more evidence of discriminative understanding of the play's ideas.



The significant weakness of the response lies in its failure in the most part to engage meaningfully with the play's contexts (AO3) – any understanding is implicit and not developed - nor with different interpretations or alternative readings (AO5). The final paragraph does make some attempt to consider alternative readings, and this perhaps suggests that the learner was running out of time:

‘As the play finishes with Blanche being institutionalised, the audience is split into two, one part believing that Blanche deserved the tragic ending that she got for trying to deceive everyone, another part believing that Blanche was a victim of the societal standards pressurised onto women in the 1940s in America, and that all of her attempts at deceit have been nothing more than her trying to survive in this patriarchal world’.

This response is certainly clear and relevant and the strong performance on AO2 allows it just to get into Level 4.

Level 4, 16 marks



Script 2, Question 17

Blanche is known to be a liar throughout A Streetcar named Desire, and is portrayed ~~to be quite sure of the~~ ^{as} unaware that she is lying on some occasions. As an aging Southern belle, her looks and reputation are her only hopes to survive following her husband's deterioration of the Old South. Upon arriving at New Orleans, she attempts to deceive Stella and Stanley, & then later Mitch, into believing the plethora of lies she fed them.

Even from when she just arrives in New Orleans, she immediately lies to Stella about not being an ~~Alcoholic~~ alcoholic; ~~using~~ Williams', using dramatic irony, makes the audience aware that Blanche is both a liar and an alcoholic. She goes on to say that she has taken a leave of



Absence from the School, which the audience doesn't know if it's true or false, giving Blanche an air of doubt. The way Blanche explains her leave of absence makes it sound like it's being thought of on the spot. When ~~asked for~~ offered another drink, she says "One's my limit", reiterating her lies. ~~Like~~ Similarly, Blanche's first appearance is her dressed up "Daintily" in all white with a "fluffy bodice". This, combined with the nominative determinism of the word Blanche, meaning 'white', seems to be her way of convincing herself and others of her purity.

~~She~~ Blanche ~~has~~ tries to use deception on Mitch, and while it does work in the beginning, Stanley's discovery of the ~~the~~ truth doesn't allow her to continue. Blanche and Mitch both wanted each other for their own selfish reasons; Blanche for protection and Mitch to stave off the loneliness when his mother dies. Blanche deludes herself into



believing that she loved Mitch, ^{but} ~~and~~ in the 2015 theatre adaptation, she sounds very sarcastic and forced when she talks to him. She tells Stella that she "wants his respect", but then continues on to say that she wants to "deceive him" into wanting her. The plastic theatre during the scenes with Mitch and Blanche are usually swathed in darkness ~~and/or~~ have dim lights. This is ~~to~~ ^{to} Blanche's plan to further convince Mitch to marry her.

Blanche and Stanley never got along, as Stanley could always see through her lies, though Blanche was convinced they were true. In scene ten, following Mitch's departure, Stanley uses Blanche's already fragile state to tell her that ~~ex~~ he knew that everything was a lie, and to then rape her. However, in scene 11, it seems like she is still convinced of her lies. This shows that she truly believes them. Despite the previous focus on outfits and plastic theatre, the play



doesn't mention Blanche's clothes
in the scene 10.

Blanche uses her lies to convince
herself that nothing bad has
happened and to keep her fragile
mind from splintering.

Examiner comment and mark

The opening of this response suggests a narrative approach, but there is consistent focus on the question in the references to Blanche being a 'liar'. There is also an awareness of Williams as a dramatist at work, e.g., 'Williams, using dramatic irony, makes the audience aware that Blanche is both a liar and an alcoholic'; 'The plastic theatre during the scenes with Mitch and Blanche are usually swathed in darkness...' However, there is also some tendency to discuss characters as if they were real: Blanche and Mitch, both wanted each other for their own selfish reasons...'

There is some very general reference to an alternative reading (AO5) – 'in the 2015 theatre adaptation she sounds very sarcastic and forced when she talks to him' - and some clear, but underdeveloped, points about context (AO3):

'As an ageing Southern belle, her looks and reputation are her only hopes to survive following the deterioration of the Old South'; '...this combined with the nominative determinism of the word Blanche meaning 'white' seems to be her way of convincing herself and others of her purity.'

Overall, it was felt that the response does enough to get into low Level 3.

Level 3, 13 marks



Question 18

In this question learners were asked to explore Williams' presentation of reputation in *A Streetcar Named Desire* in the light of the statement: 'One message of *A Streetcar Named Desire* seems to be that a person's reputation is easily lost and difficult to win back'.

Script 3, Question 18

Reputation

(1) How B's reputation is the catalyst for her downfall
(Tragic Hero) → inevitable downfall due to tragic flaw

↳ misogynistic undertone: very much still alive now:
Stanley's readiness to condemn B's promiscuity, elicited by Miller's disgust.

(2) Reputation seems to differ depending on the gender.

Stanley is glorified (proud of ~~the~~ sex BUT it seems the more sexual partners of woman, the ~~less~~ ~~more~~ more undesirable - things have entitlement to those who deserve respect and who doesn't → reputation defines who you are.

(3) Importance of reputation for Stanley:

wants to be alpha male; will not accept ANYONE,



especially women to defy him → will make it his personal goal to reassert his dominance.

↳ Blanche's rape

(4) Mitch's reputation:

"Is he a wolf"; dummy, exception, ostensible, a tender heart, caring, solution to x loneliness.

~~But quickly reputation~~ AND after violation of Blanche and disrespect, his reputation doesn't seem to change, only the idea the audience + Blanche have of him → are men allowed to commit errors + not be condemned whilst women are quickly judged.

The theme of 'reputation' is recurring and essential in Williams' ^{play} 'Streetcar Named Desire'. Primarily, it allows him to explore the ~~male attitudes towards women during the 1940s, which are~~ misogynistic male attitudes men have in the play depending on the promiscuity of women, which was an issue in New Orleans at the time that ~~it was written~~ ^{still} impinges on today's society severely. As Williams ~~explains that~~ highlights the fact that men are glorified for having many sexual partners, ~~yet~~ yet are ready to condemn and violate



women who commit these same acts. ~~and~~
Thus, cementing the importance reputation had in
the 1940's society, especially for women.

~~Stanley is portrayed as a character that~~
Arguably, Stanley's rage and condemnation towards
Blanche is rooted in his desire to maintain his
alpha-male reputation. From the very start, Williams
depicts Stanley as ^{a man} "roughly dressed in blue denim working
clothes" who "heaves" a "red-stained package from a
butcher" towards his wife. These stage directions allow the
audience to ~~visualise~~ understand Stanley's nature: he is
a working-class predator with animalistic features. In
fact, ~~Stanley being~~ Stanley being "dressed in blue denim
working clothes" is significant because it ~~perhaps~~ perhaps
mirrors the American dream, ~~which states~~ which states
that immigrants, ~~and~~ such as Stanley, could ^{migrate} ~~move~~ to
America in order to improve their economic status through
individualism and hard work. ~~Already~~ Thus, this
first impression of Stanley already suggests he ~~embodies~~ embodies
~~personifies~~ the new America, which is ~~embodied~~ embodied
a facet he seems very proud of. Therefore, Blanche's sense
of superiority and entitlement as she arrives to New Orleans
~~and~~ indeed attacks Stanley's dominance and control ~~over~~
~~Stanley's~~ over his family dynamics and relationships. The
possibility of Stanley's reputation to be diminished,



echoed by his narcissistic undertones, certainly is the main reason for his fury against Blanche. Indeed, Blanche does ~~also~~ mock Stanley in the initial scene: "only not so - highbrow?" They both laugh again".

this ~~demonstrates~~ ~~that~~ ~~signifies~~ connects to Williams' letter to Elia Kazan in which he states that "Blanche is not an angel without a flaw and Stanley's not evil". Due to the fact that ~~Blanche~~ Blanche has ~~an~~ ~~arrogant~~ ~~could be the cause of~~ a high-brow attitude because of her ~~a~~ differing upbringing. ~~this is why she is able to treat immigrants with respect~~ Through which she believes she is permitted to treat immigrants without respect as the old America was based upon slavery, ^{which is why} Blanche expects to be treated in a perfect way.

~~Stanley's~~ ~~rap~~ Once Stanley's reputation and control is minimised through Blanche's snobbery, he reasserts his dominance in the worst way possible, through rape.

In scene ten Stanley "springs towards her, overturning the table" and mischievously comments how he had "been in to [her] from the start!". This brutal act of violence ~~and~~ demonstrates ~~the~~ ^{major} importance

Stanley gives to his reputation as ~~he~~ it he won't let anyone ~~perhaps~~ ~~that~~ ~~it~~

~~relationship~~ This idea is supported by the fact that during the 20th century, after WW2, ~~the~~ the men returned with a greater sense of self-entitlement



and to work and live in America. Therefore, reputation is an indispensable theme when regarding the character of Stanley as ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~major~~ maintaining his reputation is what

ultimately makes him ^{and as my} hate/loathe in all possible ways.

Clearly, the character who cares the most about her reputation is ~~the~~ that of Blanche. However, this is exactly her fatal flaw ~~that why she is~~ which will inevitably lead to her downfall. Pretence is extremely common regarding Blanche. Not only is she an alcoholic, which becomes evident as the first thing she does once she enters the household is "rush[ing] to the closet and [removing] the bottle". She also hides ~~of being dramatic~~ this fact: "where could it be, I wonder?", despite being aware of where it is exactly. This introduction of Blanche may make the audience, who are aware of the dramatic irony in this situation, feel sympathy towards her as she is vulnerable and unconfident. ~~such as~~ such as Elia Kazan who wrote in 'The Notebook' that "Blanche could have worked, not in Stanley's world, but in another". On the other hand, the audience may perceive Blanche as a duplicitous liar who is willing



to do anything to maintain her reputation, ^{highlighting the importance of this theme in the story.} Furthermore, the statement that 'a person's reputation is easily lost and difficult to get back' is completely correct in Blanche's ~~case~~ particular case.

once her promiscuity is revealed by Stanley, her value ~~depreciates~~ ~~majesty~~ in the male gaze depreciates majesty. Mitch "(fumbles)" to embrace her" and firmly states that she is "not clean enough to bring in the house with his mother". Due to Blanche's loss of reputation, all the male persons feel entitled to touch ~~her~~ her body, and even rape her, suggesting that she is not worthy of respect. This mirrors the misogyny and patriarchal undertones ~~that~~ ~~are~~ of the 1940's and are very much alive in today's society. Whilst Stanley is glorified for having many sexual partners "as the centre of his life [had] been pleasure with women" "since earliest manhood", he is ready to condemn Blanche's promiscuity which is emphasised through Mitch's disgust towards her. Thus, Williams seems to critique the ^{role} of the male by highlighting the fact that in New Orleans society, reputation defines who you are.

~~There are~~

Williams also



Examiner comment and mark

There is a strong sense on this script of the dramatist at work, and of the text in performance, e.g., '... it allows him to explore the misogynistic male attitudes men have in the play.'; 'These stage directions allow the audience to understand Stanley's nature'. The response therefore scores highly on AO2.

Another strength of the response is in its use of well-integrated contextual material (AO3) that the learner links clearly to the topic of the question – reputation. The analysis of context is detailed and discriminating:

'Once Stanley's reputation and control is minimised through Blanche's snobbery, he reasserts his dominance in the worse way possible, through rape... This brutal act of violence demonstrates the importance Stanley gives to his reputation... This idea is supported by the fact that during the 20th century, after WW2, the men returned with a greater sense of self-entitlement to work and live in America. Therefore, reputation is an indispensable theme when regarding the character of Stanley, as maintaining his reputation is what ultimately makes him violate and destroy Blanche.

The learner addresses AO5 by using critical comments to support their own argument and demonstrate that they understand how the play and its themes are open to alternative readings:

'This introduction of Blanche may make the audience, who are aware of the dramatic irony in this situation, feel sympathy towards her as she is vulnerable and unconfident. Such as Elia Kazan who wrote in 'The Notebooks' that "Blanche could have worked; not in Stanley's world but in another." On the other hand, the audience may perceive Blanche as a duplicitous liar who is willing to do anything to maintain her reputation, highlighting the importance of this theme in Streetcar...'

Overall, this is a very strong response that sits towards the top of Level 4. The reason it was not awarded a higher mark is because the expression of ideas (AO1) is not always accurate and controlled. The criterion - 'sophisticated structure and expression' - required at Level 5 has not quite been met.

Level 4, 19 marks

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