

Drama 2019 v1.1

IA3 high-level annotated sample response

Transcript of video: Directorial vision

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IA3 high-level annotated sample response is available on the QCAA Portal.

‘The drama is a great revealer of life’

Student (throughout): Shakespeare’s works are endlessly REWORKED, REIMAGINED, REFRAMED AND RECONTEXTUALISED for new audiences. The text remains the same, but understanding and relevance for new audiences is found, ensuring the longevity of these works. The following directorial vision is a submission for the 2017 Emerging Artists Program.

King Lear: loyalty is a commodity to be traded

Shakespeare’s iconic tragedy, *King Lear* addresses many universal themes and philosophical questions that still resonate with contemporary audiences. However, this production will explore how greed and corruption obscure the true nature of humanity. This production will be marketed as *Lear*, echoing a new vision free from gender-specific titles. Marketing of the production will feature the phrase ‘loyalty is a commodity to be traded’. The themes and dramatic meaning will be communicated through the conventions of Contemporary performance.

Dramatic context

This reimagining will place *King Lear* into a family-owned corporation. Greed and corruption will be highlighted by the machinations of various members of a corporate dynasty.

Intertextual References

Projected imagery and headlines will establish the new context of the development company and the subsequent power and wealth of the owners, which drives the narrative. The text will be adapted, honing Shakespeare’s text and underscoring key ideas with visual techniques such as physical theatre, chorus and projected image. The setting, although somewhat familiar, is also ‘unreal’ for most of the audience members.

Audience members will be familiar with the character types depicted, but they will be just that, ‘types’, familiar only through the

filtered lens of media outlets and social media.

Acting

To enforce this, the actors Goneril and Regan will frequently act their characters in a two-dimensional style, bordering on caricature. This will stand in contrast to the emotional authenticity and three-dimensional depiction of Cordelia, thus creating sympathy from the audience.

Transformation

The politics of gender will be drawn upon in this production. Lear's gender will be swapped, transforming the archetypal depiction of a king into a female. She will be a matriarch, a corporate magnate. In contrast, the court will be comprised mostly of men. The gender of Goneril and Regan will be reversed to male. At times they will be flanked by their wives whose influence will be made apparent through movement sequences of human puppetry. The gender will be unchanged for Lear's other daughter, Cordelia.

Setting

The traditional 'court' setting of the opening scene will be transformed into a sun-drenched terrace overlooking the ocean, suggestive of a private island. The setting will be sleek and white, indicating Lear's wealth and control. The beach setting contrasts nature against a man-made construction, signalling how Lear has built her empire. As the play progresses the set will deteriorate, echoing the power shifts in the play. A storm will turn this ordered sanctuary upside down, signalling that one's true nature can only be controlled for a short period.

Movement

In this scene, in which the characters gather for Lear's division of wealth, communicates the hollow rituals of the social gathering. This is made clear through the ritualised movement and over-exaggerated greetings, air kisses, handshakes, selfies, compliments and subversive looks as they are circulated around the terrace. The social dance echoes the grand chain of a barn dance. Greed and the self-interested agendas of the characters are made clear. Contrast is created through the contrary actions of Cordelia who commences the dance, but then removes herself to assist Lear walk down the stairs. She attempts to re-enter the dance but is either blocked, does not know the correct actions of the ritual or cannot find her place. She is torn between the dance and remaining attentive to Lear. This contrast clearly foreshadows the character's role in the unfolding narrative.

Costume

The motivations and narrative journey of the characters are made evident through costume. The male characters are dressed in linen smart casual wear. The linen 'uniform' of the male social set signifies their conformity to the values and norms of the social circle. Cordelia is contrasted to the other characters, particularly the females. The wives of Regan and Goneril are draped in flashy gowns and jewels, whilst Cordelia wears a simple white cotton sundress. The simplicity and purity of Cordelia's intentions is made apparent and stands in opposition to the voguish, status marking fashion choices of the wives. The wives will not be given names in this production. The choice is to highlight the two dimensional stereotypes that they represent. This will be discussed further later. Cordelia's casual attire will also contrast with the power suit of Lear, matriarch of the corporate empire, indicating her ill-fit into Lear's pre-conceptions of the corporate character.

Motif

In a prologue to the production, a chorus of additional material is performed. The chorus highlights key themes of the text and features a key passage foreshadowing the tragic narrative, "The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long / That it had its head bit off by it young.... Cuckoo." This line will be chanted repeatedly with increasing alienation through vocal devices, creating a sense of foreboding and unease. This line echoes the fate of Lear and her demise at the hand of her own children. The motif of the cuckoo clock chiming will continue across the production reinforcing the inevitability of Lear's situation.

Other scenes in the production will be set against projections of land being cleared for development and images of construction whilst the family's relationships are torn apart. Irony will be created as the characters devise their bids for increased power, highlighting the silent casualties and blind self-interest of the characters.

The 2017 production of *LEAR* will rely heavily on visual imagery to communicate the consequences of unchecked greed and corruption. Key narrative moments will be enhanced by interweaving physical comedy, multimedia, and fragmented text. The dramatic meaning will be made accessible by re-locating the narrative in the familiar world of a corporate dynasty.