

Grade 12 English A

Paper 2 Mock Examination

The Taming of the Shrew, The Importance of Being Earnest, and A Streetcar Named Desire

Drama—

1. In everyday usage the word "theatrical" often means extravagant or is used to describe behavior that exhibits exaggerated emotion. To what extent, and in what ways, do at least two of the plays you have studied exemplify this definition of "theatrical"?

Wednesday, March 19, 2014

In everyday usage the word "theatrical" often means extravagant or is used to describe behavior that exhibits exaggerated emotions. To what extent, and in what ways, do at least two of the plays you have studied exemplify this definition of "theatrical"?

Two plays, The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde and The Taming of the Shrew by William Shakespeare, reflect a period of time when plays were theatrical. As these two plays were written in the 1895 and 1664 respectively, they engaged the audience with extravagance for one and with exaggerated emotions for the other. For the two playwrights, they have ~~used~~ applied a theatrical style to their play in order to emphasize their classic comedy genre.

I can read your handwriting!

In 1895, when Oscar Wilde wrote the play The Importance of Being Earnest, he decided to make it absurd but entertaining. Its absurdity, which is present in all dialogues, is emphasized by the theatrical characters as they have extravagant personalities and ~~speech~~ exchanges, "I hate people who are not serious about meals. It is so shallow of them." By exaggerating on the character's extravagance of the character's logic and manners, the playwright openly mocks the hierarchical class by commenting on the nonsense of their infinite manners and politeness and the superficiality of their thoughts. Therefore, instead to make his point aggressively, Oscar Wilde used irony. Also, the play ~~did not only~~ does incorporate a theatrical style to make the message of the play clear to all audience as the exaggeration lead to recognizable stereotypes, such as Lady Bracknell who represents the cold and arrogant bourgeoisie. On this note, it can be said that The Importance of Being Earnest reflects

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a theatrical style as its central aspect.

In The Taming of the Shrew, William Shakespeare exemplifies a theatrical genre to a ~~more diminished~~ different extent and in a slightly different way. This play is considered to be theatrical mainly due to the fast, and wise, and unexpected dialogue, "[Petruccio to Katherine] Come, come, you wasp, i'faith you are too angry. [K to P] If I be waspish, best beware my sting. [P to K] My remedy is then to pluck it out. [K to P] Ay, if the fool could find where it lies. [P to K] Who knows not where a wasp does wear his sting? In his tail. [K to P] In his tongue. [P to K] Whose tongue? [K to P] Yours, if you talk of tales, and so farewell. [P to K] What, with my tongue in your tail?" It is through the tension that leads to the extravagance in the dialogue that William Shakespeare had made his play theatrical. However, unlike in Wilde's play, Shakespeare has mainly made his play theatrical not because of its extravagance but because of the exaggerated emotion exhibited. ~~This can be seen on the last Act scene of the play when Katherine unexpectedly declares, "My husband is the"~~ In fact Shakespeare will create his comedy around a witty dialogue by mainly around the exaggerated reactions of the characters, which sometimes lead to slapstick. Therefore the theatrical aspect has been used differently by Shakespeare, but the purpose of its use is ^{slightly} at the same as it is to emphasize the comic genre of the play.

use the literary term!

don't you could memorize this!

need examples for your attention!

Both playwrights have made their plays theatrical in the sense that they reflect a rich extravagance with in the dialogue and describe the characters' behavior

as to be exhibiting exaggerated reactions and emotions. In the two plays it has been seen that they ~~to~~ commonly use the theatrical aspect as to emphasize the comedy genre with which they are associated with. The Importance of Being Earnest, however, seems to be more purely theatrical than ~~in~~ The Taming of the Shrew. ~~Even if they took~~ This is because in Shakespeare's play, the emotions expressed can be expressed to be justly profound and not exaggerated. For example in the last scene, Katharina expresses herself in the following manner, "thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper, thy head, thy sovereign, one that cares for thee, And for thy maintenance commits his body to painful labour both by sea and land, to watch the night in storms, the day in cold, whilst thou liest warm at home, secure and safe, and craves no other tribute at thy hands, but love, fair looks, and true obedience, too little payment for so great a debt." This extract from her monologue could be interpreted as profoundly sincere, ~~therefore~~ and dramatic, therefore neither extravagant nor exaggerated in emotion. While The Importance of Being Earnest is about the absurdity of the high class during the 19th century, the Taming of the Shrew ~~could~~ is about the power struggle between men and women, therefore its message is less satirical and more profound, which corresponds to a smaller extent with the theatrical aspect since this recalls on superficiality.

It can be concluded that both Oscar Wilde and William Shakespeare advances their purposes and the comedy genre associated to their plays with the theatrical aspect.

However, ~~they have~~ The Importance of Being Earnest and The Taming of the Shrew exemplify the theatrical genre differently as one uses it in the ~~dialogue~~ while ~~the other uses it~~ extravagance of the dialogue while the other one uses it in the exaggeration of the character's emotions, respectively. It has been explored that Wilde's play reflects a purely a theatrical style as it is central to his play, while Shakespeare reflects a more profound message and human nature to which the theatrical aspect distances itself from.