

Candidate 1 evidence

Drama Advanced Higher Resource Sheet	
Candidate Name	Scottish Candidate Number
Question Selected	
<p>INTRO: National Theatre, 2011. Evolution of Theatre - Danny Boyle, Nick Dear. Olivier Theatre. Key ideas of parental/scientific responsibility and what it means to be human.</p> <p>1) Tungsten bulbs, opening. Miller moves, flash bright and fade, idea of being born. Audience bonds, combination of acting and technology. Ben Brantley, NY Times.</p> <p>2) Garden of Eden: connection continued with use of rain on stage and music (Dawn of Eden). Sympathy and connection felt real.</p> <p>3) Steampunk train with hydraulics and smoke. Music: Industrial revolution. Ideas irrelevant after this point so unnecessary. Boyle and 2012 Olympics.</p> <p>4) Ballet dance: Female Creature Dream. Stage looked beautiful but dance was awkward like train, and tango felt wrong.</p> <p>6) Technology used incorrectly - Lake Geneva/Mont Blanc. Boardwalk, motorised fly, blue wash and smoke for water, but less for Mont Blanc, interpretation of themes and emphasis of key moments - more confusion.</p> <p>7) Scene on Orkney: weak characterisation, and technology used to cover created more chaos.</p> <p>8) Frankenstein's home: Ingolstadt. Rotating platform, flickering bulbs, low orange wash and singing - tense atmosphere. Acting was comic and felt out of place, lack of focus on quality of acting.</p> <p>9) Last scene: platform, blue wash and smoke (desolate environment). Come Scientist Destroy. White square. Lack of audience investment.</p> <p>CONCLUSION) impressive on surface level, used at wrong moments or to cover weak acting. "You have to kind of re-learn it a bit, I was a bit rusty". Big picture approach lost heart of production.</p> <p>Andreea Paduraru, John Stahi, Mark Armstrong (Ewan (Tab))</p>	
Word count:	247

The making of theatre has come a long way since its origins, and as the world evolves, it will continue to do the same. With every production come fascinating and revolutionary developments in stagecraft, and especially in technology. Now, in the 21st century, director Danny Boyle had this world of technological development at his fingertips, and in his 2011 production of Nick Dear's "Frankenstein", after Shelley, at the National Theatre, he certainly did not waste it. The production used impressive technology consistently to fill the grand space of the Olivier Theatre, but the question is: was the technology used necessary to communicate Boyle's key ideas about parental scientific responsibility and what it means to be human, or was it simply there to create a visual and auditory spectacle to distract the audience from a weak production by a director that had not worked in theatre for ten years?

Boyle returned to theatre for "Frankenstein" after a ten year break to focus on film, directing films such as 'Trainspotting' and 'Slumdog Millionaire', and has spoken in various interviews about the similarities in his process for directing theatre and film, such as his choice to separate himself from the actors, and his belief in the collaborative effort, which he demonstrated in this production through his work with playwright Nick Dear and the music score by Underworld.

The most prominent and impressive piece of technology used was a set of tungsten lightbulbs that hung

staggered from the ~~beginning~~^{ceiling}. They were lit at various points in different colours and patterns, but their most effective use was in the very opening scene of the creature's birth. As Jonny Lee Miller's creature broke free and began to slowly move, the bulbs flashed bright and powerful for an instant, then slowly faded, accompanied by an electrical buzzing and the sound of a heartbeat. Boyle's goal in this was to help the audience understand the feeling of being born and opening your eyes to light for the first time. This was communicated clearly and effectively, allowing the audience to bond with the creature from the start, and the combination of visually impressive technology and skilled use of movement from Miller made for a very strong ~~beginning~~^{beginning} to the production. In the words of Ben Brantley in the New York Times: "Mr Boyle has created a world in which visual metaphors assume visceral strength."

After seeing the creature being born, Boyle and his team of designers make sure to continue the connection the audience has with it. After seeing it cast off by its creator and meet cruelty at the hands of humans, which created sympathy for it, we are introduced to the key idea of what it means to be human as the creature discovers the world around it. The use of rain on stage meant the audience could see the creature feeling the water as it ~~fell~~^{fell}, tasting it, and getting wet for the first time, which allowed for more impressive acting from Miller as he contorted his body, crouched and

stretched as he felt rain and water for the first time. The accompanying music, ^{Down} 'Garden of Eden' by Underworld, a sort of gospel, choral singing, created more sympathy as we saw the creature like Adam in the Garden of Eden, discovering the world around him for the first time, and the technology used felt necessary to make the moment and connection feel more real.

~~The~~ Following these opening scenes of birth and growth, the performance began to lose some impact. The use of a steampunk aesthetic train, which appeared onstage through a combination of hydraulics and actors pushing, and emitted puffs of smoke, was visually impressive. Its appearance was accompanied by actors in steampunk costumes, shouting and behaving aggressively, and the music ('Industrial Revolution' by Underworld) was ominous and loud. These combined elements accurately portrayed the setting and industrial revolution, which Boyle had mentioned he wanted to highlight as an alien environment for the solitary, new-born creature. However, the idea of industrial revolution becomes irrelevant after this point in the production, as no other scenes are set in a large city where the revolution is relevant. Thus, such a huge technological spectacle served little purpose in enhancing the themes and performance other than in this one short moment. Shortly after directing 'Frankenstein', Boyle went on to direct the opening ceremony for the London 2012 Olympics. He said in an interview that

"we tried out in Frankenstein a couple of ideas that manifested themselves in the Olympic opening ceremony as well." Given the opening ceremony had a whole section on the Industrial revolution in Britain, it is not unlikely that the train, which felt jarring and out of place in this performance, was simply a trial for Boyle's far bigger project of the opening ceremony.

The visually impressive spectacle in the performance continued in the scene where the creature dreams of having a mate. His partner appeared, bald and dressed in rags as he is, and 'Female Creature Dream' by Underworld plays, a soft and gentle tango on guitar. The tungsten bulbs fade between blue, purple and gold as the creature and his mate engage in a sort of ballet dance. The technology used made the stage appear beautiful and ethereal but the dance itself was awkward and felt out of place, like the train. The actor Andreea Paduraru, who plays the female creature, has a background in physical theatre and contemporary dance, and her graceful movements jar with the creature's simple ones. The element of tango brought by the music also feels wrong, and overall creates confusion and discomfort for the audience.

There were also moments when technology was used at the wrong times to highlight the wrong ideas. Boyle played a lot with technology to communicate setting, especially in his

representation of Lake Geneva. The boardwalk appeared seamlessly, through the use of a motorised fly system, and with the assistance of stage hands. There was a blue wash across the stage, with the bulbs lit blue to match, and smoke was released slowly over it to give the impression of water. This, again, was visually impressive, but the setting of Lake Geneva is not nearly as significant as Mont Blanc, which is a huge symbol to show the creature's isolation and the relationship between it and Frankenstein, played by Benedict Cumberbatch. When they meet atop the mountain, Boyle went all out to communicate Lake Geneva, but when it came to Mont Blanc, no special additional technology was used except some smoke and dark lighting. Not only does this suggest confusion on Boyle's part for his interpretation of key themes and ideas, but it also means no emphasis or enhancement was added to the key moment when Frankenstein meets his creature, leading to more confusion for the audience.

From this point on, as more supporting actors became involved, it felt like technology was only used to try and mask their weak acting. When Frankenstein goes to Orkney to build the female creature, assisted by two local men, his father soon comes to bring him home. This moment is panicked and intense, which was communicated using strobe lighting and thunder and lightning sound effects, as it could not be communicated

through the stilted and exaggerated acting from George Harris, as Frankenstein's father, and John Stahl and Mark Armstrong as Ewan and Rab, the two local men. The weak characterisation detracted from the importance of this moment, and the technology used to cover it created a sort of combined chaos and confusion, rather than a truly frightening moment for the audience.

A similar moment came soon after this, when Frankenstein returned to his home in Ingolstadt. Boyle made use of the Olivier Theatre's rotating platform to create a slick set change between the workshop on Orkney and the house, which appeared slowly and menacingly as the bulbs overhead flickered dimly and a low, orange wash appeared over the stage. This, along with the cene singing from the wedding guests, created a tense atmosphere and made ~~the audience~~ the audience apprehensive of what was to come. However, this atmosphere was totally detracted from as soon as the acting began, with more comic characterisation from Ella Smith as Clance the maid, and the awkward, and thus comic, interactions between Frankenstein and his kncie Elizabeth. Even when the creature ~~finally~~ finally appears, the dialogue between him and Elizabeth is played comically, which felt totally wrong in the very dark scene that culminated in her rape and murder. The

paranomic and comic nature of much of the acting suggested Boyle's direction did not focus on the quality of the acting, and instead he hoped to communicate key themes and ideas almost entirely through his use of technology, where other productions and directors have proved it is possible to have naturalistic acting and still fill the space of the Olivier theatre.

The very last scene between Frankenstein and the creature felt somewhat like a return to the beginning, in terms of effective use of technology and set. The rotating platform was used again as a weakened Frankenstein chased the creature to the ends of the earth, crawling towards him but never quite able to reach him as the platform held him back. There was a cold blue wash onstage and smoke billowing across it to show the desolate environment and how Frankenstein and the creature rely on each other, highlighting one final time the key idea of relationships between parents and children. In the final moment, as 'Come scientist Destroy!' by Underworld plays, a powerful and loud mix of percussion and what seems like the sound of electricity, the pair move together into a square of fog and bright, white light, and disappear. This scene was incredibly effective in showing the relationship between the two after ~~all~~^{all} that had happened, but the impact of it isn't as

powerful ~~because~~ because of all the weaker moments that came before it. The relationship may have been clearly communicated, but the audience simply isn't as invested in it as it could have been.

~~The intent~~

The technology used in this production was generally only impressive on surface level, usually either communicating themes and ideas at the wrong time, or not at all, existing only to cover weak and unconvincing supporting actors. In the whole production, the only moments that felt truly impactful were those with just Miller alone on stage, or Miller and Cumberbatch together. Whilst his methods of direction in film were no doubt effective enough to win him an Academy Award for 'Slumdog Millionaire', we cannot help but wonder whether, when Boyle jokes in an interview about directing theatre that "you have to kind of ~~re-learn~~ re-learn it a bit, I was a bit rusty", this ten year break led to a lack of focus on the quality of acting, a skill that is vastly different on stage and on ~~the~~ screen, and led instead to a 'big picture' approach that created a confused production, and lost the heart of this classic story, and the heart of theatre, which is connection between actor and audience in a live performance.

Candidate 2 evidence

Drama Advanced Higher Resource Sheet			
Candidate Name		Scottish Candidate Number	
Question Selected			
<p>• Visionary, Ellen Terry, highly stylised, uncopied, Konstantin, language, conflict, artistic versus commercial, <u>Theatre</u>, unified pictures, Sense-experience, Symbolism, emotion in movement, ambition, (20)</p> <p>ber) • Full Control - Indicative personal nature, Telschy, 'Uncomplicated puppet!' "whose egos and wills would be subjugated to the director-visionary" "How much is it essential to put on a stage to convey a forest?" Unnaturalistic, primary movement emotion, Unified, perfect always, contrast - Stan's immersion, rehearsal, "Hamlet is made up of passion, style, mind ... and vision; but not character," (57)</p> <p>• (Tobé) Extensive shadow, mortality, lightness, Sadra Duncan, silver, Technology infernal, Overplot, (12)</p> <p>• (Screens) Seamless, kinetic, Adaptable. Materials, movement; too demanding, direct contrast, Curtain. "The entire scenery fell to the floor like a house of cards", "One peculiarity of this clever theatrical artist was his inability to set a stoppage point, to break off or move onto a related concept", (46)</p> <p>• (Play) Lightness Contrast. Anamorphic, literally and figuratively dark, diving to shadowy depths, father's influence. Out of mind, the Impact increased, Mystery, (20) "considered to be the most electrifying moment of [the] performance" (10)</p> <p>• (consider) Breadth of Solitude: Self-reflection (gold on screens), personal crisis, overwhelmed, grief-sorrow, Gradual, spectacle, emotional, (15)</p> <p>• (cloak) Golden with head-holes. Contradicts people. Elites upwardly luxury, arresting eyes. Dressed lights, form met-metaphor, theme, (17)</p> <p>• Despite setbacks, in line with... before its time: Scale + originality, Impact, adapting, modern context, representative theatre "an impression of stylisation that could more accurately be called sophistication", (27)</p>			
Word count:	224		

Drama Assignment - Edward Gordon Craig

Director and designer in one, Edward Gordon Craig was a visionary of English theatre in the early 1900s. Being the son of the highly famed Ellen Terry, actress extraordinaire, many may have expected him to follow the same path into acting, but Craig's passions, though they lay in theatre, were fixed elsewhere. Craig strove to break the norm of modern theatre at the time, which was by and large focused on creating highly realistic pieces representative of what one may see and experience in the real world. Craig was tired of this, and instead wanted to represent emotion and story through colour, lighting, movement, shape and form – unnaturalistic and metaphorical theatre where the actors and set pieces were put together not to try and emulate reality but to try to invoke the truest emotion in the audience through kinetic representation and subliminal conveyance of theme. He aimed to create unified stage pictures with actors, sets and lighting moving as a cohesive unit to immerse the audience and then play on their sense-experience to achieve the optimum emotional response from them. This highly stylised vision for the future of theatre heavily influenced Craig's wants and aims for the production he was requested by Konstantin Stanislavski (his later directorial partner in the project) to get involved with: Hamlet, at the Moscow Art Theatre.

Stanislavski and Craig had very different ideas about what makes a good performance and this shows especially in their rehearsal techniques, with Craig's emphasis being on an actor adopting a blank-slate-state and letting the themes of the scene be represented through their body and facial expression, and Stanislavski's being a much more immersion-based, now typical, process to try and get the actors to convey the true realism he yearned for. With this very distinct contrast in artistic aim, and the Russian to English language barrier between them, would Craig be able to achieve his goals for Hamlet? Would the reception be better than the mediocre reviews he received in his home country? Or were his lofty ambitions for the implementation of his ideas of modern theatre just too unachievable?

One very notable idea of Craig's that he aimed to include in the final production of Hamlet was that of what he called the "Ubermarionette". This was the term he coined in reference to his idea for perfect actors – those who could be controlled down to the most minute detail – and is certainly indicative of his personal nature. Craig has been reported to have been a real control-freak when it came to this production, and his stubbornness led the rehearsal process to go on for two long years, as there ended up being a lot of back-and-forth between him and Stanislavski, and bouts of frustration on Craig's part when he wouldn't get his way that would send him on long trips abroad to Europe to recuperate, only for him to return to Moscow and dismantle any work done by Stanislavski in his absence that was unrepresentative of Craig's dreams.

Craig believed that actors came with too much baggage and personal history to be useful in conveying perfect emotion and taking on direction without fault, and thus he decided he would invent a concept for them to strive to; To craft Ubermarionettes, puppets ready for the injection of character to bring them to life, "Whose egos and wills would be subjugated to the director-visionary" (Craig), was Craig's great ambition vis-a-vis his performers. He said, in support of this method of direction for his actors, "Hamlet is made up of passion... style... music... and vision: but not character" which shows he didn't feel the need for complex character or made-up attempts to ground characters such as, say, Rosencrantz and

Guildestern, whose characters are never truly developed, in anything resembling realism, instead using them as proxies with which he could further develop the themes of the play. Although this is a unique idea that may have worked well in Craig's mind, it's perhaps a good thing that it was an idea so far outside what Stanislavski, the man ostensibly letting the whole thing happen, was comfortable with the it ended up falling through, as the response from the traditional Russian crowd may unfortunately have been one of confusion above all else. Therefore, even though he doesn't here achieve his aim of incorporating the Ubermarionette into Hamlet, I do not believe it detracted from the overall impact of the performances.

Another aim of Craig's, more specific here to Hamlet, revolved around the renowned "To be or not to be" scene. Here Craig strove to (as is in line with his previously outlined ideas of metaphorical theatre) represent the core message of the soliloquy through the use of design concepts, namely lighting, costume design and proxemics. Hamlet was to stand on one half of the stage cloaked in low light and long shadow, in unremarkable clothes in muted colours, representing the "To be" of the scene – the cruel state of existence that is mortal life, and the heaviness and dreariness it carries with it. On the other side of the stage would be Isadora Duncan, famous performer at the time notable for her beautiful and somewhat erratic dancing that revolutionised the medium and opened doors for unconventional dancers of the future to take less structured approaches to movement, and she would be draped in a silvery shawl, glimmering and almost effervescent, that covered every inch of her body, translucent and reflecting the beautiful bright lights of the stage in such a way that she looked near-translucent herself: ethereal, gorgeous, and allowing for experimentative movement under the guise of a spirit, this side was to represent "...or-not-to-be", the Holy state of the afterlife and the light and lightness it brings with it, with one's soul no longer bound to the mortal coil and instead free to roam without the worries or grievances of the living.

Although this was a highly effective idea conceptually, in practise it was simply not possible to pull off with the technology that was on offer in around 1911, the time at which Hamlet was being made. This meant that Craig's aim to create the image of the ethereal, silvery woman was unachieved, as there was no way to actually make her look anything other than a very lovely woman with a nice bit of cloth draped over her. The scene did, however, continue as planned besides this fault, and therefore although the aim for the scene was not fully met it did still end up looking very near to what Craig had dreamed. It would be interesting to see, in the present day where technology would be perhaps more permitting of some of ideas of Craig's such as this, if as he predicted the impact of the scenes would be heightened greatly, or if these small details would only marginally contribute to the effectiveness of the final production.

Another key aim Craig had for his production of Hamlet was to utilise a grand design concept he had had in the works for a while now – screens. In Craig's perfect production the set wouldn't be made of painted sets that were swapped out depending on the scene and behind the curtain, and instead would have only large, towering screens that nearly touched the ceiling of the theatre, that could be moved seamlessly together into new positions to create new visions of architecture and form depending on the needs of the scene. He could, for example, line them all up in a row to create a sprawling corridor, or stagger them to create the illusion of a courtyard petering out to a point, or fashion them together in some way as to facilitate the rolling in of a set of stairs. This led to an increased flexibility in his

designs, the ability to adapt to new directorial ideas, the ability to (as Craig was want to do) use representative concepts instead of realistic ones to the same if not a greater effect, and, crucially, to be able to move seamlessly from scene to scene without the need to lower the curtain, leading to, Craig hoped, something that could accurately be called a unified piece of art.

However, though Craig was eager above almost all else to implement these screens into the final production, the way in which he insisted it be done was in direct opposition to this desire. He ordered the stagehands and designers to craft the screens only from natural materials like thick oak, rather than man-made materials like plywood which were much lighter and easier to maneuver. This insistence on detail that would essentially only serve to please Craig and wouldn't have an impact on the audience's reception of the play led to a lot of lost time experimenting. Eventually, Craig scrapped the idea, relenting, but the screen idea still fell through. Ironically, this is just what the screens did – fell into one another in a massive domino line. They ended up broken in such a way that, even after being fixed, they could no longer move smoothly across the stage and had to be carried slowly by stagehands instead. This could not be done under any semblance of professionalism in front of an audience and thus the decision was made that the curtains would in fact be lowered between scenes. This means that Craig's aim for using screens to remove the need for lowering the curtain and create a unified piece of art was unachieved. I do believe, though, that despite the failure of the screens as originally intended, Craig's rare willingness to adapt and compromise here meant that he avoided perhaps an even bigger catastrophe that may have been lined up for him should he have chosen to insist to a fault that the screens could not be crafted from man-made materials. Of the greater fault that could have been made here, Stanislavski said "One peculiarity of this clever artist was his inability to set a stopping point, to break off and move onto a realised concept". Thankfully, this was, in the end, a problem solved and compromised on, and this led to an impactful final design.

Although, as evidenced above, Craig occasionally struggled to meet his aims, I believe that overall he was highly successful in creating a final production in line with his ideas. One key moment that solidifies this fact is the "play within a play" scene. Here, the stage is laid out similarly to the "to be or not to be scene", with an emphasis being placed design-wise on the contrast between light and dark, but here instead of the stage being in halves vertically it's a horizontal split, with the courtiers and royals upstage veiled in mystery and darkness and the players downstage in a harsh light more reminiscent of the classical footlight setups typical of most modern plays of the time. This layout allows for an extra layer of shock when Hamlet suddenly launches himself into the near-darkness with animalistic fervour and attacks his uncle in a grief-stricken rage, as we could almost have forgotten the courtiers were even there if we weren't looking out for them.

Additionally, this use of dark and light, and the fact that only Hamlet crosses the border of one to the other, shows that he is both figuratively and literally in the dark in that moment as to what he is doing, emphasising the idea that he is devolving into madness as a result of his uncle's actions and the subsequent death of his father. I think this is a highly effective scene, especially as it does exactly what Craig hoped it would - represents the metaphor of Hamlet losing his mind through kinetic movement and design techniques. I think, therefore, that Craig certainly meets his aim here.

Another notable example can be seen when Hamlet walks the palace corridors alone and laments his situation. The aforementioned screens are laid out to emulate a grand corridor stretching all the way downstage, with gold paper pasted to the inward walls that shows Hamlet's reflection as he passes. The grandeur and imposing nature of the screens serves to express the breadth of solitude that Hamlet is experiencing in the absence of his father, and effectively conveys the idea that Hamlet is dwarfed by the knowledge of the evil that has been done and his father's ghost's heavy request for him to enact vengeance in his stead. Additionally, the gold paper on the screens reminds us that Hamlet is in a constant state of self-reflection during the play, and that even the lavishness of the court cannot comfort him in his grief-stricken state, nor bring him out of the rut he is in in regards to how he sees himself now that his father is gone and he is plotting murder himself. This scene was noted by one critic as "the most electrifying moment of [the] performance", and this just goes to show how much Craig's aim for spectacle and the conveyance of strong, thematically appropriate emotion was met in this moment of the play.

The final moment which I think encapsulates the success of Craig's final production, and the extent to which he met his aims, is the scene where the King and Queen address the court. In this scene, the King and Queen's shimmering golden cloaks are made to extend like a wave over the heads of all the courtiers, with designated head-holes having been cut for all of them to look through. This surreal and yet incredibly compelling scene represents the idea that the elites of this society are surrounded by luxury and unlikely to break the mould for fear of losing the place that's been set out for them. It also shows that the court truly encompasses people as the cloak does, and its corruption can twist them into letting things like the quick succession of the King slide. It is suggested that some of the courtiers may have knowledge of the scenario in which Hamlet's uncle hastily married the Queen, especially after the rather on-the-nose play scene and Hamlet's actions wherein, but take no action nonetheless. This idea is represented visually in a mesmerising manner, and is made especially effective by the use of lighting. The lighting in this scene was very low, meaning it ended up looking like a hushed evening occasion rather than a harsh, campy or comical scene, and this furthered the impact of the surreal design. All in all, Craig absolutely achieved his aim for metaphorical theme representation here, and for unnaturalistic yet effective design in theatre.

Overall, despite the setbacks outlined above, I believe that Craig managed to create a final production that was in line with his artistic vision, and the aims he had going into pre-production. It is undoubted that elements of his personal nature contributed to a particularly lengthy pre-production process, and that his stubbornness did at times lead to difficulties. However, the final product of his Hamlet as a piece of art is one before its time in both scale and originality. The impact of the play was one stronger than anything Craig had experienced before, and although some critics were a little unused to his style (with one calling it "an impression of stylisation that could more accurately be called sterilisation") his vision for the play was realised in almost every way. The innovative nature of Craig's ideas is certain when you consider the reverence in which many still hold it to this day; The strength of the play is clear to even a modern audience, leading one to consider that, if the play were put on with today's technology, it could easily be hailed as a masterpiece. Therefore, despite complications, I think it is positively clear that Edward Gordon Craig's aims for his production of Hamlet were met.