

On the Outside

Looking Inside

Staring Out

HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION ENGLISH EXTENSION COURSE 2 MAJOR WORK IDENTIFICATION TAG	
Student No.:	<u>11885225</u> C443
School No.:	<u>11172</u>
Number of Pieces:	<u>3/4</u>
Category and Description	<u>Drama Script</u>
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Candidate Number: 11885225

11172

*For Mum, for Dad
and for the guys in year 12*

Timothy Leary's dead, no, no, no, no he's outside looking in
—THE MOODY BLUES
In Search Of The Lost Chord

Characters

ROLAND, *is a fairly up-tight kind of guy, 17, the audience understands him and probably acknowledges that unfortunately he is perhaps the closest character to themselves*

ELVIS, *is more of a caricature, 19, a bit wild and funky. He has the attitude*

SOPHIE, *is a neither the token female, nor token intelligence. She's cute, blonde and has thin ankles (well at least not fat), she's also a little bit ditsy but sometimes she surprises people with the odd comment or two*

MAN, *initially portrayed as a psychiatrist his character is less concerned with personality than with his function, of course through the play this develops*

DOCTOR

NURSE

The play takes place with a fairly indefinite background. The scenes change setting throughout the play, probably with the use of slats and props - nothing to fancy.

Scene 1

Lights up. Three people centre stage on a white cushioned waiting-room couch. The names of these people are ROLAND, ELVIS and SOPHIE. The set is fairly insubstantial, there are two sets of swinging doors, one on the left, one on the right and a table in front of the couch with a couple of magazines etc. The place is a hospital waiting-room, but one could be told it was something else and you wouldn't disagree.

ROLAND, ELVIS and SOPHIE are in a state of shock, each dealing with it in their own way. ROLAND holds in his hands a letter. At this moment in time SOPHIE reads a horoscope from one of the magazines, the other two are staring into space.

SOPHIE “Leo, February: Traditionally this is a good time for Leo types. Birthday season romance for the eligible is highly possible and you should find yourself at the centre of attention. Your inner-perception will be strong around the 30th when the New Leo Moon lifts your energy levels to new highs of confidence and charismatic charm. Make the most of what should be a superb month in every possible way!”

Samuel is a Leo (*tosses the magazine back on the table*).

ROLAND The 30th?

ELVIS (*sarcastically*) Yeah, you know? It's the day that comes after the 29th but

before the 31st.

ROLAND I thought it was February.

Pause.

ELVIS Lets assume it's a leap year.

ROLAND But even in a leap year...

ELVIS Yeah, okay, lets just assume the magazine's fucked... in fact lets just assume the whole world is fucked, and be done with it.

ROLAND Very eloquent.

Enter DOCTOR bustling through the left set of doors, heading straight across the stage.

SOPHIE and ELVIS jump up.

SOPHIE Doctor?

DOCTOR *(hesitantly)* Yes?

SOPHIE Is he...you know?

DOCTOR Pardon?

ELVIS Samuel Guiles?

DOCTOR Oh. Samuel Guiles.

ELVIS What do you mean, "oh"?

DOCTOR Are you his relatives?

SOPHIE (*circumspect*) Friends.

DOCTOR Well I'm afraid I can only speak to his relatives.

ELVIS What!?

DOCTOR Hospital practice, I'm afraid, now if you could arrange for his family to be notified...

SOPHIE His family are in Nicaragua.

DOCTOR Nicaragua?

ELVIS They're academics, bro.

DOCTOR In what?

ELVIS Stuff.

DOCTOR What stuff?

ELVIS Academic stuff. Look the point is we've all he's got.

DOCTOR Oh.

SOPHIE They've left for the week.

DOCTOR Oh.

ELVIS We found him.

DOCTOR Oh.

ELVIS Look I'm getting a bit sick of "oh", can you at least tell us if he's still...

DOCTOR Look I'll send the nurse in as soon as I can. Now you'll have to excuse me.

DOCTOR *exits through the right set of doors. SOPHIE and ELVIS sit back down.*

ROLAND I can't piece it together. It doesn't make sense.

ELVIS Random.

ROLAND Complete random.

SOPHIE It was a decision, not chance.

ROLAND But it wasn't him.

ELVIS Who says we knew *him*?

SOPHIE Past tense? *Past* tense? He's not past tense! You don't know what's happening!

ELVIS Well what do we know then?

ROLAND What do we think we know?

SOPHIE *We* know him. We know him and who he is, and if we don't know him then... then...

ROLAND But we couldn't have known this was going to happen.

ELVIS Then, what do we know?

ROLAND *holds up the letter.*

ROLAND (*He reads from the front*) "What I know".

ELVIS Open it.

SOPHIE No!

ELVIS Why not?

SOPHIE We can't.

ELVIS Its what he'd want.

SOPHIE We shouldn't.

ROLAND Without it we don't know anything.

SOPHIE But I don't want to know.

ROLAND Sometimes you just have to know.

ELVIS Its what *he* wants us to know.

They stare at SOPHIE, she turns away.

SOPHIE Al.. Alright.

ROLAND *flashes a glance at ELVIS and then proceeds to open the letter. He takes out a single sheet of paper, unfolds it and stares at its blank surface.*

SOPHIE Well?

ROLAND Nothing.

SOPHIE *turns around.*

SOPHIE What do you mean “nothing”?

ROLAND Nothing. He felt he knew nothing.

He hands the letter to SOPHIE.

ELVIS Well, I'll be damned.

SOPHIE *begins to cry.*

ELVIS *gets angry, he crushes the paper up and throws it to the ground.*

ELVIS But we know something. Don't we? Heh? Don't we?

Enter NURSE, they all get up.

NURSE Are you the ones that know Samuel Guiles?

Lights down.

Scene 2

Lights up. An office high up in an art deco office block. In the background is a high arched window. All this might be established by the lowering of a few slats in front of the hospital set. There are four chairs, centre stage is the chair of MAN, the other three chairs are evenly spaced around this central focal point. Within them sit ROLAND, SOPHIE and ELVIS. At the beginning Sophie and Elvis are in black.

ROLAND Samuel was a man I never understood, I think that's what made him so attractive.

MAN Attractive Roland? How do you mean?

ROLAND Well he was always a mystery - he was unpredictable, unfathomable I never

knew what I was dealing with. That made him, well, exciting.

MAN So you liked Sam? He was a friend?

ROLAND I said he was attractive so I suppose I liked him but he wasn't a friend, no.

MAN Why not?

ROLAND I think I wanted to, ... to really tap into something engaging but I don't think I even held his interest - friendship is not a choice, it's a coincidence of intrigue and bearability. I could never be *his* friend.

MAN So he rejected you?

ROLAND With neither pain nor regrets.

MAN Do you think he was happy?

ROLAND Well I liked to think he was not, that his rejection of me was a reflection of internal frustration and insecurity but I guess I never really knew.

MAN Yet you wanted to know?

ROLAND Like nothing else - we've all got faults, goddamit what were his?

MAN But he must have had problems.

ROLAND We've all got problems, *we've all got problems...* That's why I'm here. But Samuel's not, is he? Samuel didn't show me anything no emotion, I saw a character but I never saw a man - A man in full: and the bastard left us all wondering.

MAN Roland... you're angry.

ROLAND Yeah I'm angry, with what he did.

MAN Aren't you angry with yourself?

Lights down.

Scene 3

Lights up on MAN and SOPHIE. The set has not changed just the focus, by using the lighting.

MAN Sophie, who was Samuel?

SOPHIE Sensitive, charming, good-looking - damned good-looking, bit of a sucker for blondes, had a thing about ankles, he detested fat ankles. He said girls with fat

ankles were like rolling your sleeves up, if it was that bad at the bottom it could only get worse further on up.

MAN *(Quickly glancing at his own ankles)* What was your relationship to him?

SOPHIE I loved his arse, quite a number of times. He charmed the pants off me, literally.

MAN What do you think he liked about you?

SOPHIE Babe he loved everything... I don't know, I think it was a connection, we both were feeling people, emotion in motion. He just was such a high strung guy and there were sometimes he just snapped.

MAN How?

SOPHIE It was like a flood of emotion it all bubbled out of some deep well and someone had to pick up the pieces.

MAN So it was with you that Sam confided in.

SOPHIE Not that I always wanted to hear. I've got problems to you know! I didn't always want to hear his shit.

MAN So where were *you*?

Lights down.

Scene 4

Lights up on ELVIS and MAN.

ELVIS Drugs do funny shit to a guy.

MAN How do you mean? Physically? Mentally?

ELVIS Yeah, but that's not important, you see Doc. Its philosophy, it changed his whole philosophy.

MAN To what?

ELVIS Life... the whole schbang, melon and banana included... the poor guy was fucked
- I think.

MAN Elvis... tell me about Sam, how he was... at the start.

ELVIS Look. Sam was a nice guy - all class, a lot of personal integrity and shit. He was intelligent and a really creative guy. He painted the maddest pictures I ever saw from a kid. Big swathes of colour and life - lustful oranges, violent reds, naughty yellow and tenuous flirtations with blue and green. He would just see much in

stuff.

Once we were on the beach and he goes: "Hey Elvis, see this rock man?!" And I'd say "Yeah rock, okay, it's only a rock get over it, don't have an orgasm or something." You know, I just saw a plain, simple, sedimentary rock which gave me preferably forgettable images of High School geology.

Sam looks at me with that glint in his eye. "Elvis, don't you see?! It's a journey, a weathered journey, a life so deeply cut and scarred its irremovable, unforgettable, but it all forms a hard shell - protecting whatever is on the inside." The little bastard was so damn alive.

MAN But he changed?

ELVIS Look, man, you gotta realise - while Sam might be intelligent and creative and shit, he wanted a hit. He got depressed, man, real depressed - so he asked me for a hit.

MAN Drugs?

ELVIS What was I supposed to do. He wanted some shit and I got it for him - he just wanted to get out, out of the house, out of his parents, out of his girlfriend, out of all of it. And everyone had Coke.

MAN You got him Cocaine.

ELVIS He took the Coke - just for the parties and shit, he knew you weren't supposed to get hooked - he was big enough and ugly enough to look after himself.

MAN Was he?

Lights down.

Scene 5

Lights up on MAN and SOPHIE.

SOPHIE I thought it was love, but I'm not sure he did. We used to have so much fun together movies, parties, stuff like that but they weren't the moments, you know.

MAN What were the moments Sophie?

SOPHIE Just being together, times when we just walked the beach at night or times we talked for hours on end, and then realised we'd said nothing. Time spent but not wasted, you know what I mean?

MAN Yes.

SOPHIE I don't know, that's the way it used to be. He changed, I don't know why.

Lights up on ELVIS too.

ELVIS It started off small, just occasionally, parties and stuff. A bit of weed here, bit of Coke there. It didn't seem like a big deal. Everyone knew everyone else was doing it - I didn't think much about it until it just got a bit too regular, every weekend. We'd always go out together, like, and watch each other, but then he'd start asking me for a hit and then going off by himself - I couldn't watch him, keep him on track.

MAN What did you do?

ELVIS Well I stopped getting it for him, said my sources dried up, disappeared - I think he just went and found somebody else.

Lights up on ROLAND too.

MAN Did you notice a change in Samuel?

ROLAND Not really, no.

MAN Nothing?

ROLAND Perhaps he grew chest hair, I don't know - what are we getting at?

MAN Did you know he was involved with drugs?

Pause.

ROLAND From that Sophie bird I bet. No, no I didn't.

MAN Sophie?

ROLAND Yeah, crazy bird, Samuel had some crazy thing about her, said she had nice ankles or something. I didn't look at the ankles, I prefer breasts personally.

MAN So you saw no change in Samuel caused by the drugs.

ROLAND As I said before Samuel distanced me. But anyway, drugs? Are you saying that caused his...

MAN Go on Roland.

ROLAND Look, I don't do any of that type of stuff, maybe I will, one day, but that's immaterial. Things happen, a lot of bad stuff happens to us kids and people turn around and try to find answers. "His father hit him", "the kids bullied him", "Another example of a kid on drugs" etcetera, et-fucking-cetera. It's all a

scapegoat. Kids do dumb stuff for a reason, its not this “peer pressure” bullshit, we’re not dumb innocent lambs.

MAN So it wasn’t drugs?

ROLAND They’re just pills, somebody, a person has to take them. They have to have a reason that goes beyond just being ‘cool’.

Pause

MAN So you *now* think Samuel had problems

SOPHIE I don’t think his family were that nice. Funny talented people, but not nice.

MAN This affected Sam?

SOPHIE There wasn’t that much love in that house, you know. Lots of entertainment, lots of creativity but probably just a guard for *real* emotions.

ELVIS Papa was an asshole. They were old money, so he just did what he wanted - extremely self-obsessed man, introverted, mum was the same. It bred, like an atmosphere of individualism, no responsibility to each other, meant nothing mattered - no love.

ROLAND I wish my Dad was that funny, all my father does is work. They were all so lively and creative.

MAN Intelligent?

SOPHIE Definitely.

ROLAND I think he wished he was

ELVIS I didn't care really, neither did he.

MAN Popular?

ROLAND Of course, unluckily. But I know he put on this special charm of that guy who was so caught up in troubles that women just had to know

ELVIS The chicks thought he had nice hair,

SOPHIE He had that type of attractive inner turmoil, it was so genuine.

MAN Genuine?

SOPHIE Genuine.

ELVIS Genuine!

ROLAND Genuine?

Lights down.

Scene 6

Lights up on MUFF and ELVIS.

ELVIS I was running out of money, he was getting it from somewhere else anyway.

MAN So you got it for him.

ELVIS At least that way I knew it was decent... well I thought it was decent, I didn't think he would...

Lights up on ROLAND.

ROLAND He seemed happy when he left school, although he did have to borrow my chem book, which I desperately needed. I don't know why he took it though, his parents were out that night: wouldn't be like him to waste the opportunity on molecules. Anyway said I should come pick it up around six.

Lights up on SOPHIE.

SOPHIE Rang me up about five, said to come over. Said something about a new bed cover that I would like.

ELVIS I called at five-thirty to see if he wanted to go out, he said come round about quarter to six, said something about the stupidity of Hydrocarbons.

ROLAND I arrived at about six to see if he'd finished with chem, he wasn't there, obviously went out, just as I thought.

ELVIS Rocked up sort of on schedule, maybe quarter of an hour late, found that Roland fellow knockin' on the front door.

SOPHIE I got there at about five past six. I met Roland and that weird Elvis guy staring at the doorknob. They both were after Sammy by the sounds of it. It was almost as if he'd meant us all to come together. I knocked a couple of times and there was no answer, so I thought he must have been out back. I had a key anyway so we went in.

Pause.

ROLAND I think he stopped belief.

ELVIS In life.

SOPHIE In love.

ROLAND In happiness.

ELVIS In himself.

Pause.

SOPHIE We found him on his bedroom floor.

Lights down on all except MAN. MAN appears to be thinking, hands against head, rubbing his face.

SOPHIE, ROLAND *and* ELVIS *leave.*

Lights down.

We hear from the darkness the phone ring. It is answered by the answering machine. It is ROLAND's voice calling about the Chemistry book.

Lights up on a bed, on the top is a cover with the words "I love Sophie" written all over it.

Lights up on a desk where a chemistry book lies. Lights up on the central four chairs. The

MAN still sits, the other three chairs are swivelling around as the other three have left. The MAN pulls a jar of pills out of his pocket and downs half the jar. He pulls out the remote to the stereo and starts some music. Slowly he slumps to the ground, in his right hand he holds a letter. SOPHIE enters, followed by ELVIS and ROLAND.

SOPHIE *(softly and surprised)* Samuel?

Lights Down.

Scene 7

Pause.

A harsh spot comes up on MAN who is down stage. He sits on a white cube. In his hand he holds a rock, in his other hand he holds a letter, he reads from the letter.

MAN “What I believe

In three different rooms, I have three different mirrors

And in three different mirrors, I have three different faces

And in three different faces, I have three different people

And in three different people I have everyone but me.”

MAN wraps the rock up in the paper, and places it on the ground. MAN exits into the

audience. Lights Down.

Scene 8

Lights up. ROLAND, SOPHIE and ELVIS sit on the white-cushioned couch back in the hospital ward, except this time they just don't know it. The only other difference is that the rock wrapped in the letter remains, it is in the same place as the crunched up piece of paper in the first scene.

ELVIS So they've finally locked us up together... inside... inside... a room.

ROLAND No. Didn't you get the last bit? We're inside that guy's head.

ELVIS Whose head?

ROLAND That guy's (*points to where MAN was, but now isn't*), well the guy that was there.

ELVIS But whose the *guy*?

ROLAND I...I...I'm not too sure.

ELVIS: Useful. Anyway he certainly had a big head, a real big head!

ROLAND: No, no, you've got it all wrong - its metaphorical.

ELVIS: Meta - forehead - what?

ROLAND: Metaphorical!

ELVIS: Yeah I hear'd ya the first time bro, but what do ya mean?

ROLAND: Exactly.

ELVIS: Eh?

ROLAND: That's what we've got to find out.

ELVIS: Look, I'm not buying into this "Met a guy in a forest" bullshit, I don't even like forests, or forehead or what ever it is - I need a to take a leak.

ROLAND: What?

ELVIS: A leak, bro. Now if this was a proper forest at least I might find some trees.

ROLAND: Don't be stupid. Nobody ever needs to take a leak in a metaphor, unless I suppose its metaphorical - a metaphorical leak.

ELVIS: Yeah... okay, it's a (*doing the hand action for speech marks*) "metaphorical leak", so where do I get to hang it?

ROLAND: Hold it.

SOPHIE: (*Interrupting*) Stop it.

I think we're in a hospital.

ROLAND: Err... no. I don't think so, this is definitely a metaphor, and we're in it - we're challenging the boundaries, searching for meaning and providing the truth - this most certainly could not be anything so boring as a...

Suddenly a set of doors, previously unnoticed on the left, burst open and an entourage of doctors and medical staff rush through with somebody on a guerny. They head straight across the stage and exit through another set of doors on the right.

ROLAND: Metaphor. Definitely a hospital, no doubt about it.

ELVIS *glares at* ROLAND.

ELVIS: We'll if it's a *hospital*, and not a metaphor, then its probably got some *hospitable*, and not metaphorical toilets.

ELVIS *exits through one left set of doors.*

ROLAND: So what are we doing in a hospital?

SOPHIE: Waiting...waiting or dying, that's all people seem to do in hospitals.

ROLAND: So which one are we?

SOPHIE: Well are you dying?

ROLAND: Well I'm waiting.

SOPHIE: I suppose we're all waiting *to die*. That's all we really know.

ROLAND That's life.

SOPHIE Yeah, life - death...

ROLAND ...and the waiting in between.

SOPHIE Like a giant waiting room.

ROLAND Like a giant *hospital* waiting-room.

SOPHIE Metaphorically speaking.

ROLAND Of course.

They both fall back, downcast.

Pause.

ROLAND But wasn't there a time when...

SOPHIE When what?

ROLAND When there was something more?

SOPHIE More?

ROLAND When we *knew* more.

SOPHIE We never knew more - birth, death and the time in between, that's all we've ever known.

ROLAND Well at least we *thought* we knew more.

SOPHIE Perhaps someone can tell us?

Enter ELVIS.

SOPHIE Did you see anybody?

ELVIS Not a soul. No one's here. The place is deserted.

ROLAND Weird.

ELVIS I found at what day it is though.

SOPHIE What?

ELVIS Sunday.

ROLAND Sunday? I remember Sundays, something special.

They think.

ELVIS Roasts! Sunday roasts!

They pause.

ROLAND No. No I don't think so, Sunday... Sunday...

Enter DOCTOR

SOPHIE Doctor! (*She points*)

ROLAND and ELVIS (*They all jump behind the seat in fear*) Where? Where?

ELVIS I'm defenceless, not one single apple on me!

The DOCTOR plays the first scene over again, but this time, by himself, talking to where the others were standing before hand.

DOCTOR (*hesitantly*) Yes?

DOCTOR Pardon?

DOCTOR Oh. Samuel Guiles.

DOCTOR Are you his relatives?

DOCTOR Well I'm afraid I can only speak to his relatives.

DOCTOR Hospital, practice, I'm afraid, now if you could arrange for his family to be notified...

DOCTOR Nicaragua?

DOCTOR In what?

DOCTOR What stuff?

DOCTOR Oh.

DOCTOR Oh.

DOCTOR Oh.

DOCTOR Look I'll send the nurse in as soon as I can. Now you'll have to excuse me.

DOCTOR *exits.*

ROLAND I think I remember!

SOPHIE Samuel, Samuel Guiles.

ROLAND Samuel Guiles and a doctor.

ELVIS Samuel Guiles and a doctor and stuff.

Getting more and more excited...

SOPHIE Samuel Guiles and a doctor and stuff and Nicaragua

ROLAND Samuel Guiles and a doctor and stuff and Nicaragua and family and hospital and nurse and...

It dawns.

ELVIS Oh.

SOPHIE Oh!

ROLAND Oh?

ELVIS Oh.

They collapse upon the couch.

SOPHIE We're back where we started.

ELVIS Where?

ROLAND With nothing.

SOPHIE Remember? We knew nothing.

ELVIS Nothing?

ROLAND Absolutely nothing.

They pause. ELVIS catches sight of the astrology magazine. He pauses then...

ELVIS *(Grabbing the magazine and triumphantly holding it aloft)* But we believe in something!

SOPHIE What?

ELVIS We believe!

ROLAND Yes...but in what?

ELVIS Everything! Samuel, death, life, passion, pain, suffering, love, life, happiness, ourselves... There! The letter! There!

He picks up the rock wrapped in the letter. He reads the outside.

“What we believe” That’s it...

He opens the letter up, and reads it. He looks confused.

SOPHIE What does it say?

ELVIS I... I don't know.

ROLAND *takes the letter from him.*

ROLAND Something at least?

(Reading from the letter)

“For Samuel there are three different people
And these three different people have three different faces
And these three different faces have three different mirrors
And these three different mirrors are three different worlds in one house.”

SOPHIE I think its what we know.

ELVIS No... its what we believe.

SOPHIE And we believe, we believe in Samuel and a doctor...

ROLAND And stuff...

ELVIS And Nicaragua...

SOPHIE And family....

ROLAND And hospital...

SOPHIE And nurse...

ELVIS And... oh.

ELVIS then slowly crushes the rock. We realise it was merely clay, in fact very fragile and just turns to dust.

ELVIS We didn't have to know anything, we just had to believe.

Enter NURSE, they all get up.

NURSE Are you the ones that know Samuel Guiles?

Lights down.

THE END

HSC English Extension 2

On the Outside Looking Inside Staring Out

Medium: Play script

Candidate Number: 11885225

11172

Reflection Statement

On the Outside Looking Inside Staring Out is the product of a year long process of independent investigation into both the conceptual notions of post-modernism and the dynamics of the dramatic medium. This reflection statement will view the product, the process and the relationship between the two in the three main areas of: what the Major Work hopes to achieve, what are the relationships between the various features and conventions within the work and how these concepts were developed and realised. Thus this statement will touch upon the intent, the process and the understanding gained from the Major Work in each area.

The objectives of this Major Work can be viewed in terms of four main issues: the intent of the work, the relationship it has to independent investigation, the audience intended for the work and its purpose. The intent of the work, meaning in a personal context what the author hoped to achieve from the process and product of the work, was to communicate some form of critical concern regarding the modern human condition - in an entertaining and engaging fashion. This was a part of a broader intention to learn the skills and gain the experience in how to write an extended work. The reason that I wanted to investigate an aspect of modern life was because it was an area that I and my audience could relate to more easily.

In order to achieve this intention it was crucial to engage in an independent investigation of the medium in which the work was to be composed. To narrow the options down the investigative process first entailed extensive experimentation into virtually all the mediums offered. This enabled me to distinguish which medium I was more intuitively comfortable with and enjoyed so that I could confidently focus upon the conventions and dynamics of that particular medium.

The two media that became the focus of my efforts were film and drama script. The investigation consequently took on the form of research into the theories, skills and conventions behind these media. This investigation led to some conclusions about the nature of each medium. In the end this investigation led to the choice of drama as the medium of my Major Work. This was because my research had developed my understanding of drama's focus upon character and language in contrast to film's reliance upon plot. This focus upon character and language seemed a more applicable vehicle for my intention of exploring an aspect of the human condition.

The second investigative level in regards to the intent of the work was what particular aspect of modern life did I wish to explore. This independent investigation once again took the shape of research, experimentation and reflection. In order to investigate a "modern" concern, I focussed upon my own experiences and investigated through experimentation some of the issues touching my life - concerns about identity, mortality, friendships and the elderly. In the end the intention of my work was achieved by concentrating upon two main modern issues. On a theoretical level - the postmodernist challenge to truth, which was associated with concerns about identity. This was developed in an investigation of post-modernism. As a

dramatic vehicle to investigate this concept I chose the suicide of a young man, which is a modern day concern, especially for the young. The real basis of the idea was the suicide of an older member of my family, and the associated disbelief and questioning of just how little we knew.

On the Outside Looking Inside Staring Out is written for a contemporary, essentially young audience because it attempts to deal with issues that a contemporary audience can relate to as its own. This is a product of the purpose of the work, meaning what impact the author hopes to make upon his audience. The purpose of the work is to draw the audience along in an exploration of the notion of “perceptions”. The play is focussed around three main characters in Sophie, Roland and Elvis and the way in which they deal with the attempted suicide of their friend - Samuel. Thus the play seeks not necessarily to demonstrate, but to provoke thought about how differently the same person, object or event can be viewed by different people. Hence the purpose of the play is to draw people into a reflection upon the nature of truth - the fact that there is not one certain truth, but on the other hand nor can we live in a world where we “know” nothing, rather it’s all a matter of belief, and belief makes truth for each individual person. Thus there is a direct link between the purpose of the play and its audience. This is because the statement the play makes about truth stands in direct and intentional reaction to the postmodernist challenge to truth. Hopefully when performed in front of an audience that has lived through the postmodern age or anyone who has ever questioned the nature of “truth” it will provoke thought along these lines. This is the purpose of the work.

The features and conventions within the work can be viewed in four main areas: concept, structure, technical aspects and language. Each area is inter-related with the others and all

have influenced each other in the development of the Major Work.

The play is, in summation, an exploration of the concept of “perceptions”, through the dramatic vehicle of modern human reactions to suicide, finishing with a statement about the postmodern challenge to truth. These features are expressed through the dramatic qualities of the text. The structure of the play is especially important, but it is supported by the technical and language features and conventions. The first part of the play establishes a typical modern-day situation with the three characters Sophie, Roland and Elvis. This scene establishes the status quo and the disturbance of the drama with the hospital waiting-room setting and attempted suicide of their friend Samuel. This scene acts as a naturalistic opening for the characters to start questioning the nature of truth in a situation which is designed to encourage questioning about truth, life and reality. This naturalism is established by the language of the characters which is realistic and a product of my investigation into the speaking styles of my friends. For example Elvis’ language was modelled upon the “surfies” in my football club and the astrology article upon the *Astrological Monthly Review*. Thus the structure and the language of the play allows the audience to be drawn into characters that are recognisable and familiar.

The second section of the play is the heart of its dramatic investigation of the nature of perceptions. It shifts into a type of psychiatrist’s interview format established primarily by the language of question and answer within the scenes. This allows each character to speak with alleged truth what they knew about the character of Samuel, before he attempted suicide. This psychiatrist format is especially important because it gives the initial impression of “certainty”, after all, who would lie to a psychiatrist? But as the dialogue develops one realises that each

person's perceptions of Samuel are completely different and contradictory. Thus Samuel was a completely different person to each of these three characters, and the question therefore arises, was there ever a Samuel when he is simply the product of fickle memory? Can we ever truly know anything? Does truth exist? This effect is heightened by the technical quality of lighting and placement. The lighting substitutes for the traditional conventions of physical movement. It provides dynamism in a substantially static play. Plays normally rely heavily upon action but this play uses the opposite stasis for maximum contrast. The technical seating arrangement can provide focus to the "Man" and when the central "Man" character actually does move it is therefore very powerful. The realisation that he is actually Samuel and that the others are parts of his own perceptions of himself is thus technically communicated by this central positioning.

The third section is almost a form of conclusion but although the dramatic climax comes at the end of the second section, the climax of realisation comes in the third. Structurally the play returns to its beginning, a common feature of postmodernist plays. But this time the characters do not know anything. They do not know who they are or where they are or why they are where they are, even whether they are real or imaginative or a metaphor is questionable. The concept is that the characters have now assumed that there is no "truth" in life, so to speak, as established in the second section, and now this "postmodern" philosophy is being applied to real life - they do not know anything. Of course the adoption of this notion leads to chaos and absurdity - a juxtaposition to the realism of the first scene. This post-modern, absurdist feel is communicated through the now very quick and jilted language.

Thus through structure the play is able to demonstrate that this post-modern idea of "no such thing as truth" might work in theory but does not work in real life. Instead it is *belief* that

forms the foundation of real lives. It is when the characters begin to *believe* in values, people, emotions and passions that the characters (and the play) return to a more natural form, a symbol that it is belief that underpins real life, and thus forms its own “truth”. Thus in an ironic way, although suicide is a terrible thing it is our belief in that person and the consequent feelings of loss and grief that we have that are what actually make us human.

On the Outside Looking Inside Staring Out can be seen as the realisation of the independent investigation carried out through the year. The investigation of postmodernism can be shown to have shaped the structure of the play in returning to the beginning at the end, the language of fast word-play and the conceptual notions about truth and its validity. The investigation of the dramatic medium can be shown to have influenced the presentation of these ideas in terms of the manipulation of structure, a focus upon character as a vehicle of realisation and the methodology which was adopted in the process of writing. *On the Outside Looking Inside Staring Out*, therefore, is a product of my own hopes for the work, the manipulation of theatrical features to achieve these hopes and a process of development to form the final product. It is a representation of my intention, my process and invaluable understanding I have gained from the experience.