

'macbeth' by william
shakespeare, 'the
crucible' by arthur
miller and 'st joan' b...

[Literature](#), [William Shakespeare](#)



In this essay I will be comparing the three plays I studied. These are 'Macbeth' by William Shakespeare, 'The Crucible' By Arthur Miller and 'St Joan' by Bernard Shaw. In comparison to the three plays, I have found out that they are slightly similar, e. g. they involve witchcraft, supernatural interaction, murder, suspicion and false accusations.

In 'Macbeth' act 5 scene 1 Lady Macbeth is seen talking and acting suspiciously. E. g. rubbing her hands as if there is blood on them. She feels different emotions in this scene. "Out, damned spot! Out, I say!" she is frightened and somewhat angry because she can't get the blood stains off her hands. The other characters in this scene are the Doctor and Gentlewoman. They are monitoring Lady Macbeth's actions and become suspicious of her.

The genre of 'Macbeth' is classical, whereas 'St Joan' and 'The Crucible' are naturalistic. In classical plays they use conventions like expressing their emotions through their speech; this is because it was originally staged in an open air theatre where emotions are difficult to express through body language. However naturalistic plays were performed on a proscenium stage, this made the conventions different to classical plays and is somewhat the opposite of it, for example emotions can be expressed through body language, and this is known as melodramatic.

Furthermore, more props can be used; different tones in voice can be expressed. Real time is when the time in the play is in a fixed time i. e. time cannot be shifted into the future or past. However real time cannot be used in classical plays like 'Macbeth' where the play is shifted from one point in

time to another, this is known as flash forward or flash back. Speech differs from naturalistic and classical plays, these differences are that pauses and interruptions can be made in naturalistic plays, and there can be narrators on the play.

In 'Macbeth', there society is monarchical i. e. the power comes from kings and queens. People in that time were suspicious and judgemental, evidence can be seen from when Macbeth murders Banquo, they suspect Malcom and Donalbain because they fled to different countries. They value loyalty, nobility, royalty and titles e. g. "Thane of Cawdor" is the title given to Macbeth.

If I were to act out the following lines:

Out, damned spot! Out I say! One; two: why, then 'tis time to do't. Hell is murky! Fie, my lord fie! (act 5 scene 1 lines 34-35)

I would express these lines in a way that the character is paranoid and anxious. I would shout the words out rather than speaking subtle. However this is a classical play and was originally staged in a theatre where people would find it hard to notice the emotions expressed. Hence, the actorsactresses must emphasise what they are saying. I would also use stage directions like hand gestures, however it may not be effective enough.

In the extract of 'St Joan' Joan is in a court room, she agrees to sign a paper which will show that her actions i. e. communicating with God was a lie. After signing it she realises she is to be incarcerated in 'Solitary Contemplation'

which means she cannot be set free due to her sins. Joan feels shocked and angry, “[Rising in consternation and terrible anger]: Perpetual imprisonment! Am I not then to be set free?”

The context of ' St Joan' i. e. the society in the play is religious, military, judicial and political, all these contexts can be seen in the court room scene in ' St Joan'. Their society values God, this can be obviously seen when they convict Joan of receiving messages from God. Their society is offended by this.

In order for one to act out ' St Joan' they would have to use a lot of stage directions and props to make the play more clear to the audience, the genre is a historical epic meaning it is based on something that really took place, this means that the character would have to act like it really did happen.

“[She rushes to the table; snatches up the paper; and tears it into fragments]” There are a lot of quotations like these, they are stage directions, this shows that this is a naturalistic play unlike ' Macbeth', which uses fewer props and stage directions. There are also interruptions and pauses. Unlike ' Macbeth', characters in ' St Joan' express their emotions in only a few words. “ Blasphemy! Blasphemy!” This is being melodramatic.

If I were to act out the following lines:

Light your fire: do you think I dread is as much as the life of a rat in a hole?
My voices were right.

I would first perform the stage directions. Then I would say the lines in an angry way, I would also use hand gestures to express emotion since this would be performed in a proscenium stage. Meaning the audience is more closer to the play in comparison to 'Macbeth' it would be more clear.

In the extract of 'The Crucible' the scene shows Abigail being accused by Proctor for witchcraft. However Abigail blames Mary and all the characters become hysterical. This situation is similar to 'Macbeth' and 'St Joan' e. g. Characters create false accusations. In this scene Mary is feeling somewhat horrified because Abigail is imagining there is a bird in the air, "(on her feet with a spring, and horrified, pleading): Abby!" In the other plays e. g. in 'Macbeth' Macbeth is the character that is scared.

In 'The Crucible' The society was set in Salem time which was around the 17th century, in Salem many ordinary people were wrongly accused of witchcraft. Like 'St Joan' their society valued religion i. e. both plays are somewhat based around religion. This can be seen in 'St Joan' where Joan is accused of talking to God and in 'The Crucible' where Abigail is accused of witchcraft. "But God made my face, you cannot want to tear my face. Envy is a deadly sin, Mary."

The genre of 'The Crucible' is a historical epic meaning that it was based on something that happened in the past. Hence, this play would require actors/actress to act out like it really happened. E. g. act frightened of witchcraft, act judgementally etc. This is similar to 'St Joan' and requires a lot of stage directions e. g. Hand gestures. This play is naturalistic, like 'St

Joan' is requires conventions such as stage directions, "[pointing]: It's on the beam: behind the rafter." It would be easier to perform these because it would be originally staged in a proscenium theatre. Pauses are also used, "Be quiet." The conventions are somewhat similar to ' St Joan' but not ' Macbeth', the dialogue is simple i. e. the characters in ' The Crucible' do not need to say how they feel.

If I were to act out the following text:

I cannot hear you. What do you say? (Mary utters again unintelligibly): You will confess yourself or you will hang! (He turns her roughly to face him). Do you know what I am? I say you will hang if you do not open with me.

I would start to speak in a scared way, then change my tone in an angry way. I would also use body language i. e. in this case I would turn my face in an angry way. This play is similar to ' St Joan' and performed the same way and since it would be performed in the same stage, the audience can easily spot the body language.