

"coram boy" by jamila gavin essay sample

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



The two plays I will write about are my devised piece and ' Coram Boy' written as a novel by Jamila Gavin and adapted for stage by Helen Edmundson.

My devised piece was very different to Coram Boy, although it had some similar elements in it. It had a very fluid structure, with undefined scenes that merge into each other via smooth transitions. My devised piece was in chronological order however time was abstract, and some parts of the play fast -forwarded slightly in time. In the latter stages of the piece, some lines were repeated from previous parts of the play, however these were parts of the main character's memory. The piece was quite abstract, some scenes showing naturalistic conversation (such as the ' generals talking to the main character Colonel Armstrong), and other parts that showed complete abstraction, often depicting Colonel Armstrong's deteriorating mental health. Genre-wise, my devised piece was a tragic play, showing the brutality of military life, with occasional comical elements.

Coram Boy is also a fairly abstract piece; however there is a much more naturalistic feel to the dialogue and movements of the characters. The plot is clearly linear and all characters are portrayed in a very realistic way. Like my devised piece, there are no defined scene changes, even when the characters move location, but the set changes very noticeably as this is done, helping the audience depict a new setting. The play is very stylised, and the action tense. The set and costumes are extremely lavish and expensive, using many different lighting states and music to make the audience feel like they are entering 18th Century England, because this is not implied solely by the acting. This is very unlike my devised piece, which

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was very minimalist, using one lighting state and only chairs and army jumpers for props and costume, and no music. The play is very serious, with elements of tragedy and horror, creating a mixed genre. Meshak, the son of the main villain Otis Gardiner, sacrifices his own life to save two children Aaron and Toby. The horror is generated from the actions of Otis Gardiner, who kills babies and exploits their parents. Despite this the play has some comical elements towards the beginning of the first and second halves.

My devised piece has a dark theme. The tyrannical Colonel Armstrong abuses and insults the privates of his company until he accidentally kills one of them. He is wracked with guilt and fear of getting caught and lets his guard down for the other privates to stand up for themselves and bring him down. It is up to the audience's interpretation whether he is killed or not. Every character in the play conspires against Armstrong. The play is also very much a tragedy, as the character Private Brown gets killed as a result of Armstrong's carelessness. Coram Boy has also got a dark theme. In terms of genre the piece is filled with drama, and is set in an almost gothic style, but there are elements of tragedy here too. The antagonist Otis exploits mothers of illegitimate babies by telling them he will take them to the Coram orphanage, but instead buries them alive. In the second half of the play, when the audience thinks him dead, he is secretly sending children to America as slaves. The other main tragic part is Meshak sacrificing his own life to save the children.

The language in my devised piece reflects the backgrounds from which the characters come from. Colonel Armstrong speaks with a very stern accent

and articulates himself clearly. This shows his high status and intelligence. Private Brown speaks with a working class Londoners accent which show his roots as a south London drug-dealing teenager. Private Rosenberg speaks with more of a middle class voice and has much less confidence. Private Powell speaks with an east London ' Cockneyish' accent with more of a gruff tone, as he is the oldest of the privates. The generals who question colonel Armstrong talk with very pompous upper class English accents and stutter a lot, because they are old and senile.

In Coram Boy all of the Ashbrooke family speak with an upper class accent, with Lord Ashbrooke speaking in the snootiest accent of all. Thomas Ledbury speaks with more country working class accent, as he of a poor background. Otis Gardiner speaks in a gruff fearsome tone with a lower-class accent and so does Mrs Lynch.

The underlying theme of my devised piece is the concept of overthrowing an oppressive power. This theme was inspired by the poem Jabberwocky by Lewis Carroll, which depicts a warrior slaying a monster, in a very abstract style. My devised piece shows Colonel Armstrong as this oppressive power, and the privates as the force that brings him down.