

The crucible and john proctor



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Macbeth and John Proctor are both main characters from different books but both have similarities and differences. Macbeth is from William Shakespeare's, *Macbeth*, and John Proctor is from Arthur Miller's, *The Crucible*. The similarities between these two main characters are the impact witchcraft makes in their lives, their tragic flaw, and the respect each character has with his society. Witchcraft is a very powerful thing. Some people believe in it and some do not. When it comes to Macbeth and John Proctor, witchcraft plays a large role in both their lives. Macbeth first crosses paths with witchcraft when he meets the three witches.

The witches give their predictions to Macbeth which sets the whole play in motion. When the third witch predicts for Macbeth, “‘ All hail, Macbeth! That shalt be King here after’”, he starts to wonder if and when he will become king and wants to hear more predictions. John Proctor is also influenced by witchcraft. The Devil is believed to be amongst the people of Salem and anyone who believes in this Devil must be involved with witchcraft. Elizabeth Proctor, John's wife, was accused of being involved with witchcraft activities by the court.

The Proctor's servant Mary Warren explains to Proctor and his wife, “‘ I saved [Elizabeth's] life today’” (Miller 59). This statement makes Proctor upset. Even though Proctor and Macbeth have been influenced by witchcraft, each man has a different way with dealing with it. Macbeth is different from John. He likes the witchcraft and lets it affect his decisions. He is greedy after he realized the first prediction came true and wants to go back for more. Macbeth says to the witches, “‘ I conjure you, by that which you profess.

However you come to know it – answer me”. Macbeth is relying on the witches predictions in order to help him make other decisions in his life that could possibly help him. This is where John Proctor differs. He does not believe in witchcraft and accuses Abigail Williams as a fraud in court. Proctor knows Abigail has been involved with witchcraft because she admitted this information to him. The only thing that weighs heavy on his mind is that they were alone when she told him this and it would be hard for him to prove. John explains to Elizabeth, ““ I am only wondering how I may prove what [Abigail] told me”.

Witchcraft affects both characters similarly, but it is the way they handle it that sets each man apart. Macbeth and john proctor both have a tragic flaw that leads to their ultimate demise. Macbeth’s tragic flaw is his ambition His ambition being; his want and need to become the king of Scotland. John proctor on the other hand had has a more respectful tragic flaw. John’s flaw is also ambition. Both of their flaws lead to decisions that ultimately affect their life. In order to reach his ultimate goal and ambition, Macbeth takes it upon himself to make his ambitions happen.

By doing this he commits unnecessary and shameful murders which turn out to be productive in his attempt to reach his final goal. Macbeth’s tragic flaw caused him to lose respect and integrity amongst his peers and his true character revealed. This is where John Proctor and Macbeth differ. Where Macbeth loses all his integrity and respect John strives to gain it back and becomes a better man. John needed to restore his name and gain the respect, reputation and trust from not only the townspeople but more

importantly his wife. “ How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name! (Miller 143).

This is showing he would rather lose his soul, in other words die, and then have his name disgraced. This is where John’s tragic flaw comes and affects his life. The only way John can become true again in everyone’s eyes is through his death. He would rather die with all the respect, He would rather die with a good reputation that he wanted, he would rather die knowing he had his wife’s trust, but he would not live and have none of these. This is John’s tragic flaw. Macbeth died with his character diminished in everyone’s eyes and John died with his character intact.

John Proctor and Macbeth both have tragic flaws, and this ambition is what kills them both. When it comes to respect, Macbeth and John Proctor have great respect at the beginning of both books. King Duncan respects Macbeth for fighting and being in his army because Duncan felt the need for Macbeth to be respected as the ‘ Thane of Cawdor’. Duncan exclaims, “ And with his former title greet Macbeth”’. This respect Macbeth receives from Duncan is the kind of respect he receives by others as well.

John also holds a great deal of respect in his village of Salem. He is known as a respected land owner, a father, and a husband. It says that, “[John Proctor] was a kind of man – powerful of body, even tempered and not easily led...” (Miller 20). Macbeth begins to lose respect after each decision he makes. Suspicions of Macbeth become apparent after the King is killed. With each murder Macbeth commits, the more respect he loses. John Proctor gains

respect as the play progresses. Proctor's servant, Mary, is one of the reasons he loses respect at the beginning of the play.

She lies to the court during his trial and says John forced her too. As the play progresses John is accused of being associated with witchcraft. He believes that by saying he was not a participant in witchcraft that his name will be saved from dishonor. Proctor ends up dying with nobility and as a honourable man. Respect is huge role in both characters, but as the play progresses Macbeth loses his, and John Proctor gains redemption, honour, and respect. Macbeth, from the play Macbeth, has both similarities and differences compared to John Proctor from The Crucible.

Macbeth and Proctor are influenced by witchcraft but Macbeths decisions are more affect because of it and he believes in it whereas John Proctor does not believe in witchcraft. Macbeth and Proctor have the same tragic flaw ambition, however John has good ambition to help restore his character whereas Macbeth has a blinded ambition that harms himself. Both characters are respected. Macbeth loses his respect, while Proctor gains all his back. Comparing the two main characters Proctor could be seen as the better man.