



Marking Activity

Student 1:

4(a) There are specific choices in this extract for performers.

(i) You are going to play Herrick. Explain two ways you would use physical skills to play this character in this extract.

(4)

- I would sway from side to side as I was talking to show that I had been drinking and that I was nearly drunk.
- I would also share my flask of drink with Sarah Good, walking towards her and offering her a sip to show that I understand why she is there.

(b) There are specific choices in this extract for a director.

(i) As a director, discuss how you would use one of the production elements below to bring this extract to life for your audience.

You should make reference to the context in which the text was created and performed.

Choose one of the following:

- costume
- staging
- props/stage furniture.

(9)

If I was directing this extract, I would carefully consider the costumes that the characters were using. As the play was set in 1692 in a puritanical society, I would keep the costumes in line with that time period, so Sarah and Tituba would wear long dresses that covered their bodies up and a cap over their heads. I would ensure the dresses were dirty and ragged to indicate to the audience that they are living in horrible conditions in jail. I would also have them wearing ripped and grubby slippers. This would indicate their low status within the play as their dirty and ragged appearance shows that they are not in control of their situation.

I would show Herrick in clean, well looked after clothes with a cloak over the top, which indicates his status in this extract as a legal representative and the most authoritative character before Danforth and Hathorne come in. I would however show the costume to be a bit dishevelled to show that he had been drinking in this scene and was not behaving in a responsible manner, for example, I would have his cloak hanging down over one shoulder.

(c) There are specific choices in this extract for designers.

Discuss how you would use one design element to enhance the production of this extract for the audience.

Choose one of the following:

- set
- lighting
- sound.

(14)

If I was designing the set for this extract, I would create the feeling of a prison by making it feel very sparse on stage. There would be hardly any furniture on stage, just some hard wooden benches and chairs with no bed clothes or blankets. There would be no decoration or anything to indicate warmth or hope in the set, it would be bleak and plain to show hopelessness and that it would be very cold. The colours would be dull and be earthy, (browns, greens and greys), filthy colours to show that the cell is unclean and that there is no concern for the people living in there.

There would also be a heavy clanging door, stage right, to show that Sarah and Tituba are locked up with no hope of escape. There would be a step down from the door into the cell, to show the higher status of Herrick and the other characters who will be coming into the cell, and the lower status of Sarah and Tituba. They will be looking down on them from the moment they can see them. I think this will be an effective way of showing their lack of power and status as they will have to look up to everyone who enters the scene and when characters exit they will step up and out, leaving the women below in their hopeless state.

Student 2:

4(a) There are specific choices in this extract for performers.

- (i) You are going to play Herrick. Explain two ways you would use physical skills to play this character in this extract.

(4)

- One way I would use physical skills would be to move slowly and take small steps to the bench putting one foot in front of the other to show that I am afraid of falling or tripping before nudging Sarah Good with my foot.
- Another way I would use physical skills would be when Danforth asks if I am drunk I would stand still and upright, with my feet apart for balance and look straight at him when I reply to pretend that I have not been drinking and that it is the cold that is making me stagger, not drink.

(b) There are specific choices in this extract for a director.

- (i) As a director, discuss how you would use one of the production elements below to bring this extract to life for your audience.

You should make reference to the context in which the text was created and performed.

Choose one of the following:

- costume
- staging
- props/stage furniture.

(9)

As a director I would want my staging to indicate to my audience the 1950s setting of my production. I would concentrate on creating staging that looks like red brick walls and a stone floor with the entrance and window representing thick iron bars. The play was set in 1692 in a puritanical society, but it was first performed in 1953 at a time of political unrest in America and my overall production design would aim to reflect this. In this extract, for example, there will be a backdrop of a typical American city skyline visible through the bars of the window which will be in the centre of the upstage flat. I will use this image to help my audience to visualise the context of this extract.

The scene change from Act Three would be achieved on a revolve in my proscenium arch staging with the three walls of the cell looking like red brick that is broken only by the window and the door. The door will be typical prison bars from the time period of my production and this will be in the stage right flat, so the audience can see out into the corridor and this would be the only entrance and exit. I would use a snap fade to bring up a harsh white light in the corridor when characters approach the cell and there will be an American flag and a large framed photograph of the president visible on the corridor wall when the lights fade up. It is symbolic that the flag and the photograph are outside the cell and characters like Danforth, for example, walk past them to use the door to get into the cell.

The flooring will be made to look like grey stone flags and help to give the audience a feeling of a cold and bleak place and the benches that are mentioned in the extract will be made of metal mesh and attached to the walls, one under the window and the other on the flat stage left. They are important to my staging as they reinforce the harshness of the cell and the metal connects to the iron bars of the door and the window. Sarah Good, for example will be on the bench stage left which means that Herrick has to walk the length of the cell to get to her at the start, past the window so the audience will see the skyline outside it because of his use of the space in this extract.

(c) There are specific choices in this extract for designers.

Discuss how you would use one design element to enhance the production of this extract for the audience.

Choose one of the following:

- set
- lighting
- sound.

(14)

As a lighting designer I would have a number of choices in this extract and I would have to think carefully about how to enhance the production for my audience. Lighting is important for creating mood and atmosphere and I will aim to make the scene as harsh as possible with my lighting with, perhaps, having a contrast between the lighting in the corridor that can be seen through the prison door and the more subdued lighting in the cell itself.

It is important that the characters can be seen. One way of doing this would be to have light coming through the window that will be on the upstage flat as if it is dawn so I would use a pale straw colour initially and it would cast a shadow of the bars on the cell floor stage centre to indicate the context for the audience. This would be a controlled flood of light as the shape of the window would help to limit it and would be more effective than using a gobo.

The light from the corridor is very important in my design as it will be made up of three spotlights directly overhead that come on in sequence as characters walk along the corridor towards the cell. They will be very focused to create circles of light on the floor and as one comes on, the previous one goes off until the last one which is outside the cell and that will stay on after Danforth's entrance to connect him to the outside world and freedom.

The major challenge is overhead lighting in the cell itself. Herrick has a lantern in the script but as this interpretation is set in the 1950s he would flick a light switch before he comes into the cell and three bulbs suspended above the set and encased in wire mesh would give a dull glow to the cell. I would enhance this light by having a flood of light from above and downstage of the cell in order to let the audience see what is happening and to support the effect of the 3 suspended bulbs, the light from the window and the light from the door.

The only colour I would have in my lights would be in those from the window. This will help the audience to see the harshness of the conditions in the cell.