

DIRECTIONS: Read and annotate the following excerpt from one of the six discussed Critical Lenses. Provide a brief interpretation of this excerpt through this lens at the end of the passage.

DANFORTH: *(realizing, slowly putting the sheet down).* Did you ever see anyone with the devil?

PROCTOR: I did not.

DANFORTH: Proctor, you mistake me. I am not empowered to trade your life for a lie. You have most certainly seen some person with the Devil. *(Proctor is silent)* Mr. Proctor, a score of people have already testified they saw this woman with the Devil.

PROCTOR: Then it is proved. Why must I say it?

DANFORTH: Why "must" you say it! Why, you should rejoice to say it if your soul's truly purged of any love for hell!

PROCTOR: They think to go like saints. I like not to spoil their names.

DANFORTH: *(inquiring, incredulous).* Mr. Proctor, do you think they go like saints?

PROCTOR: *(evading).* This woman never thought she done the Devil's work.

DANFORTH: Look you, sir. I think you mistake your duty here. It matters nothing what she thought—she is convicted of the unnatural murder of children, and you for sending your spirit out upon Mary Warren. Your soul alone is the issue here, Mister, and you will prove its whiteness or your cannot live in a Christian country. Will you tell me now what persons conspired with you in the Devil's company? *(Proctor is silent).* To your knowledge was Rebecca Nurse ever—

PROCTOR: I speak my own sins; I cannot judge another *(Crying out, with hatred)* I have no tongue for it.

HALE: *(quickly to Danforth).* Excellency, it is enough he confess himself. Let him sign it, let him sign it.

PARRIS: It is a great service, sir. It is a weighty name; it will strike the village that Proctor confess. I beg you, let him sign it. The sun is up, Excellency!

DANFORTH: *(considers; then with dissatisfaction).* Come, then, sign your testimony. *(To Cheever)* Give it to him. *(Cheever goes to Proctor, the confession and a pen in hand. Proctor does not look at it.)* Come, man, sign it.

PROCTOR: *(after glancing at the confession).* You have all witnessed it—it is enough.

DANFORTH: You will not sign it?

PROCTOR: You have all witnessed it; what more is needed?

DANFORTH: Do you sport with me? You will sign your name or it is no confession, Mister! *(His breast heaving with agonized breathing, Proctor now lays the paper down and signs his name).*

PARRIS: Praise be to the Lord!

(Proctor has just finished signing when Danforth reaches for the paper. But Proctor snatches it up, and now a wild terror is rising in him, and a boundless anger.)

DANFORTH: *(perplexed, but politely extending his hand).* If you please, sir.

PROCTOR: No.

DANFORTH: *(as though Proctor did not understand).* Mr. Proctor, I must have—

PROCTOR: No, no. I have signed it. You have seen me. It is done! You have no need for this.

PARRIS: Proctor, the village must have proof that—
PROCTOR: Damn the village! I confess to God, and God has seen my name on this! It is enough!

DANFORTH: No, sir, it is—

PROCTOR: I have confessed myself! Is there no good penitence but it be public? God does not need my name nailed upon the church! God sees my name; God knows how black my sins are! It is enough!

DANFORTH: Mr. Proctor—

PROCTOR: You will not use me! I am no Sarah Good or Tituba, I am John Proctor! You will not use me! It is no part of salvation that you should use me!

DANFORTH: I do not wish to—

PROCTOR: I have three children—how may I teach them to walk like men in the world, and I sold my friends?

DANFORTH: You have not sold your friends—

PROCTOR: Beguile me not! I blacken all of them when this is nailed to the church the very day they hang for silence!

DANFORTH: Mr. Proctor, I must have good and legal proof that you—

PROCTOR: You are the high court, your word is good enough! Tell them I confessed myself; say Proctor broke his knees and wept like a woman; say what you will, but my name cannot—

DANFORTH, with suspicion: It is the same, is it not? If I report it or you sign to it?

PROCTOR—he knows it is insane: No, it is not the same! What others say and what I sign to is not the same!

DANFORTH: Why? Do you mean to deny this confession when you are free?

PROCTOR: I mean to deny nothing!

DANFORTH: Then explain to me, Mr. Proctor, why you will not let—

PROCTOR, with a cry of his whole soul: Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life!

Because I lie and sign myself to lies! Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang! How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name!

DANFORTH, *pointing at the confession in Proctor's hand*: Is that document a lie? If it is a lie I will not accept it! What say you? I will not deal in lies, Mister! *Proctor is motionless*. You will give me your honest confession in my hand, or I cannot keep you from the rope. *Proctor does not reply*. Which way do you go, Mister?

(His breast heaving, his eyes staring, Proctor tears the paper and crumples it, and he is weeping in fury, but erect.)

DANFORTH: Marshal!

PARRIS, *hysterically, as though the tearing paper were his life*: Proctor, Proctor!

HALE: Man, you will hang! You cannot!

PROCTOR, *his eyes full of tears*: I can. And there's your first marvel, that I can. You have made your magic now, for now I do think I see some shred of goodness in John Proctor. Not enough to weave a banner with, but white enough to keep it from such dogs. *(Elizabeth, in a burst of terror, rushes to him and weeps against his hand)*. Give them no tear! Tears pleasure them! Show honor now, show a stony heart and sink them with it! *(He has lifted her, and kisses her now with great passion)*.

REBECCA: Let you fear nothing! Another judgment waits us all!

DANFORTH: Hang them high over the town! Who weeps for these, weeps for corruption! *(He sweeps out past them. Herrick starts to lead Rebecca, who almost collapses, but Proctor catches her, and she glances up at him apologetically)*.

REBECCA: I've had no breakfast.

HERRICK: Come, man.

PARRIS: *(in deadly fear, to Elizabeth)*. Go to him, Goody Proctor! There is yet-time!

(From outside a drumroll strikes the air. Parris is startled. Elizabeth jerks about toward the window).

PARRIS: Go to him! *(He rushes out the door as though to hold back his fate)*. Proctor! Proctor!

(Again, a short burst of drums).

HALE: Woman, plead with him! *(He starts to rush out the door, and then goes back to her)*. Woman! It is pride, it is vanity. *(She avoids his eyes, and moves to the window. He drops to his knees)*. Be his helper!—What profit him to bleed? Shall the dust praise him? Shall the worms declare his truth? Go to him, take his shame away!

ELIZABETH: *(supporting herself against collapse, grips the bars of the window, and with a cry)*. He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him.

(The final drumroll crashes, then heightens violently. Hale weeps in frantic prayer, and the new sun is pouring in upon her face, and the drums rattle like bones in the morning air).

The curtain falls.

Interpretive Lens: _____

Interpretation Points With Textual Support:

Psychological Theory

Basic Points:

This theory strives to reveal unconscious fantasies of the author, reader, critic, and even fictional characters; examining a work for the unconscious fantasies that the artist, character and reader] could not otherwise admit consciously. Many times a student studying from this lens will consider the motivations, background and internal thoughts of the character.

Beliefs:

- The mind can be divided into three parts: the id, ego and superego.
 - The id is the part of the personality that contains our primitive impulses and the desire for instant gratification or release.
 - The superego is the part of the personality that represents the conscience, the moral part of us.
 - The ego is the part of the personality that maintains a balance between our impulses (our id) and our conscience (our superego).
- All people have unconscious wants and motivations. We often do not know these (and they aren't explicitly stated in the text) because they are unknown...they come about when unable to be controlled.
- Family dynamics and significant events in one's childhood affect us throughout our lives.
- A defense is occurs when our subconscious is trying to protect our conscious. Below are some common defenses.
 - Repression-a person defends himself/herself by ignoring the problems.
 - Regression-a person reverts back to an immature or infantile state to avoid facing the real issues.
 - Projection-a person cannot handle a weakness in him/her and therefore projects it onto someone else.
 - Denial-a person denies a problem because it is easier to deal with it in that way.

Questions to Consider:

- Which of our characters are dominated by their id, ego or superego? What does this say about their values and character? What does this reveal about them?
- We know Abigail's parents were murdered. Specifically, how has this come into her conscious in this excerpt? What does this reveal about individuals and the role our backgrounds influence us?
- Abigail is very defensive in this excerpt. What might Abigail be repressing in this scene?
- Similarly, Mary Warren is very passive and regressive. What might she be avoiding? Why? What does it say about her?
- Are any characters projecting? Who is on the receiving end of the projection? What motivates each of our characters? Combine these motivations and consider what this reveals about human nature.

When examining from the Psychological perspective, you must consider the big picture, the larger implications for human nature/society. Combine all of the above interpretations and insights about the characters. What is playwright Arthur Miller trying to convey about human nature? About the strong? About the weak? How might this play be a study of what people are comprised of?

Interpretation Points:

Historicism Theory

Basic Points: This theory is examining the historical context and the background of the author. The primary belief of this theory is that the text is understood through the eyes of the author and the events that shaped the author.

Beliefs:

- Text's meaning is determine based on the time it was written
- Reader must reproduce the author's "logic," attitudes, cultural circumstances, perspectives to determine meaning.
- Uses the life of the author to explain the work—not the work to explain the life.
- We cannot force our meaning into the novel; we must consider the author's perspective
- We must understand the author before we can understand the literature.

Questions To Consider:

- The Crucible was written in the 1950s, a time also known as the McCarthy era. Arthur Miller, the playwright, was affected by the events surrounding Senator Joe McCarthy and took the occasion to write this play. Read the provided summary of McCarthyism and answer the following questions:
 - Who from the play would be
 - Joe McCarthy?
 - The Blacklisted
 - The HUAC members
 - Other than characters, what parallels can be drawn between the Red Scare/McCarthyism and the events of The Crucible?
 - Which time period from the McCarthy era is best represented by the excerpt from The Crucible?
 - Based on your knowledge of the time period, what is Miller's purpose in writing the play? Prove your answer through textual evidence.
 - What is Miller's argument? What side do you think Miller supported during McCarthyism?
 - What elements/attitudes/beliefs from this scene reflect McCarthyism? What do these elements reveal? Why are they significant?
 - Why was Arthur Miller motivated to write this play? How is this reflected in the scene?
- Can you think of any other historical or contemporary events that inadvertently connect to this play?

Examine the excerpt for how it reflects history. Use your answers to the above questions to provide a synthesized interpretation about history's influence on Arthur Miller and thus the play. You might consider the argument presented by Arthur Miller about the McCarthy era and how it is supported by the text. Make sure you can provide textual evidence to support your interpretation.

Interpretation Points:

Marxist Theory

Basic Points: This theory is examining power and the way in which our society functions. While many times analyzing through this lens is considering the role of the government, it doesn't have to be limited to just that institution.

Beliefs:

- Typically this school of thought argues that most government systems are corrupt or dysfunctional.
- People of the lower classes are discriminated against or essentially ignored.
- Values often manifest themselves in power.
- Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Questions to Consider::

- In this section of the text, who is supposed to have the power? Who actually has the power? Who has no power? What does this reveal? Why is this significant? Who is benefit by the power? In this excerpt, what does power do to our characters?
- Which class does the playwright, Arthur Miller, seem to believe the reader should sympathize with? What does this reveal about his intention or purpose to writing?
- How might you divide up the characters? What divides or separates them? What do these divisions represent? What comment is Arthur Miller making about the separation of classes and role of power?
- How do the characters challenge those in a position of power?
- What values are reinforced in this passage? What values are subverted/challenged in this passage? Why is this significant? What argument does this help to establish for the reader about power?
- What political statement is being made about power and the government in this section of the text?
- What political beliefs does Arthur Miller seem to dislike? How is your answer supported by the text?
- What is Arthur Miller saying about justice and the role of the government (theocracy) at this time?

Examine the excerpt for what it reveals about division of classes and the role of the government/those in power. Use your answers to the above questions to provide a synthesized interpretation about class. You might consider the argument presented about power. What is Arthur Miller trying to teach us about power and the way it affects us? Make sure you can provide textual evidence to support your interpretation.

Interpretation Points:

Gender Theory

Basic Points: This theory examines the ways in which men and women interact with each other and within their own gender. Also, this theory examines what is expected of each gender.

Beliefs:

- Women are oppressed by patriarchy economically, politically, socially and psychologically.
- Men are marginalized because of societal expectations of them.
- Gender issues play a part in every aspect of human experience, whether we are consciously aware of these issues or not.
- If women are successful they are viewed negatively. If men aren't successful they are viewed negatively.
- Everything that happens between men and women furthers a belief about the gender as a whole.

Questions to Consider:

- Who pretexts/mentors Mary Warren? What is revealed about each gender because of this relationship?
- How is Mary Warren treated by the Magistrates (Danforth)? What attitude/belief is perpetuated by this?
- Examine how Abigail and her cohorts treat the men and Mary Warren in this piece. What does this reveal about each gender?
- How would you describe the tone of Danforth and Proctor?
- How are the women judged?
- Examine the role of Elizabeth. She is brought in to bring clarity to the scene, but what happens instead? How does this affect the reader's view of women?
- How does Proctor feel about Danforth and the Magistrates? What does this reveal about the relationships between men?
- Overall, how are women treated in this scene? What role do they play in the scene?
- Which gender does Arthur Miller want us to favor based on this excerpt?
- Who ultimately has the power in this scene? What does this say about the gender?

Examine the excerpt for what it reveals about men and women. Use your answers to the above questions to provide a synthesized interpretation about the roles of men and women. You might consider the argument presented about gender and the relationships between and within genders. What is Arthur Miller trying to say about women? What is he trying to say about men? What is he trying to say about the way in which each gender acts? Make sure you can provide textual evidence to support your interpretation.

Interpretation Points:

Archetypal Theory

Basic Points: A student studying a text through this lens will look at the piece as a whole, then analyze the parts to interpret how they impact the whole. The study of symbols and archetypes and motifs are crucial to this theory.

Beliefs:

- Character, theme, setting, symbol, motif, language, etc. is used to determine meaning, not plot progression.
- There are patterns and structure to each work. These patterns and structures help create meaning.

Questions to Consider:

- Examine the following symbols:
 - Poppet: A poppet is a doll. What is the function of a doll? What purpose does it serve? What is the significance in Mary Warren giving the doll to Elizabeth Proctor? How does the doll's role change?
 - Bird: What does a bird typically make you think of? How is this interpretation subverted or perpetuated in this instance? What is the function of a bird in this scene? What might this symbolize? How does the color of the bird subvert or reinforce the reader's perception?
 - Eyes and Sight: These become motifs in the excerpt (a motif is a recurring symbol). How many times does Arthur Miller make reference to seeing, staring or looking? Why does he choose to make reference to these symbols so frequently? What do they stand for or represent? How might these symbols factor into an argument Miller is making?
- Symbolism can also be examined in regards to patterns. Examine the purpose of the following:
 - How many times is the word "whore" delivered in this excerpt?
 - How many does Danforth ask Proctor about his charges of Abigail?
 - When does Abigail repeat herself?
 - What do these patterns reveal? Examine the archetypal numbers
- What emotions are evoked by the symbols?
- How does religion and faith become a symbol?
- Which symbols are associated with which character? How these symbols structure the reader's belief about each character?
- Which symbols provide foreshadowing for what is to come?
- To what extent is the setting symbolic? Do not consider the religious aspects, but the setting itself. What does the set for this scene represent?

Look at the function of all of the symbols. Use your answers to the above questions to combine your interpretations into one large interpretation about the passage. What is Arthur Miller trying to convey, according to the symbols? What do these symbols tell us? What argument is he trying to put forth through the inclusion of the symbols? Make sure you can provide textual evidence to support your interpretation.

Interpretation Points:

Symbol	Traditional Meaning
Heaven vs. Hell	Man has traditionally associated parts of the universe not accessible to him with the dwelling places of the primordial forces that govern his world. The skies and mountaintops house his gods, the bowels of the earth contain diabolic forces.
Colors	Red: blood, sacrifice, passion, disorder Green: growth, hope, fertility Blue: highly positive, security, tranquility, spiritual purity Black: darkness, chaos, mystery, the unknown, death, wisdom, evil, melancholy White: light, purity, innocence, timelessness (negatives: death, horror, supernatural) Yellow: enlightenment, wisdom
Numbers	3—light, spiritual awareness, unity (holy trinity), male principle 4—associated with the circle, life cycle, four seasons, female principle, earth, nature, elements 7—the most potent of all symbolic numbers signifying the union of three and four, the completion of a cycle, perfect order, perfect number, religious symbol