Drama, Society's Mirror, and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*

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INTRODUCTION

The stage is oft times a happy place, despite it being the place where all of our foibles and trials are shown to the world. Here we sing, dance, laugh, and love. It doesn't matter that here we also bemoan our existence, shatter dishes, cry, and hate with a passion. That's just life. And, then, we go on to the next phase.

The stage is also a partner. Through it, we can get a better handle on how to make it through this thing called life. Through it, we can readily view our trials, and once again experience the pleasures of life. It is one of our safe havens. And, unless we jump into the midst of the experiences it offers us, it can only touch us fleetingly and, even then, only emotionally. The stage is like a partner through whom we can vicariously share the pleasures of life, and which offers us solace from the pain it brings. In this way, it becomes our helpmeet, which, if valued, will join with us in a happy, insulated marriage of the mind.

The stage then, when we look at the study of America through a look at the plays she has inspired, is the filter through which the pain, misery, and strife cannot pass. We can see the tribulations through which this peculiar people have come, but we don't have to shoulder the responsibility of their mistakes. We can smile at their triumphs and grimace when we see their pettiness. We can stoically defend their right to have acted in such a fashion. However, we don't have to accept their punishment, nor do we have to testify against them. Embodied only on the stage, the dramas are our partner, our erstwhile spouse. As such, they stand by themselves, with us beside them in a marriage without shackles – a happy union from which we can learn and, through it, grow. And, even if it shows us the basest deeds or the most heart rendering scenarios, this is a relationship that cannot diminish us. The stage, our loving, protective spouse, shields us. It helps us mature, even as it brings us face to face with that which we have wrought.

Our students, though, do not view the plays that come to life on the stage in such an appreciative light. When given instructions to read one, they – at best – seek to read it for enjoyment; at worst, they view it as an unpleasant task to be hurried through and soon finished. It is my desire that the students I service read with an eye to the play's relevance in their lives and the lives of their counterparts in society. Given that, my unit on *The Crucible* will seek to deal with how drama is yet another way of looking at everyday life – theirs and/or their predecessors in America which is, in itself, – with its melting pot analogy – a type of crucible.

IMPLEMENTATION

The first thing I would want to impress upon the young readers is the fact that though the play is intended to mirror the world in which the playwright is interested, it is not necessarily a photograph. I want them to understand that it most likely resembles a mirror of that society, reflecting that which has gone before or is happening now, but distorting it to reflect the playwright's "take" on the same. It is critical that they understand that though the play speaks to the history, it is not the history. They must know that the writer has license to fit the history to his message, and the obligation to remain true to both. With this in mind, as we read the play orally, we will stop occasionally to point out various historical facts gleaned from our first assignment – a biography of Arthur Miller, completed prior to commencing reading of the play.

When introducing the work, I will begin with a definition. The most critical definition would be that of a crucible – ". . .a severe test or a hard trial. More pointedly, [the students must know that] the term also refers to a container that can resist great heat and is used for melting and calcining ores; most commonly the end product that comes out of the crucible is purer high-grade steel" (Martine 13). As Danforth quite directly warns Proctor, 'it is my duty to tell you this. We burn a hot fire here; it melts down all concealment" (89). After giving this definition, I will ask the students to first relate crucible to a word or words they already know. At least one will put forth "crucify," at which time I will give a brief review of the difference between connotation and denotation. And, immediately before having the students provide the dictionary definition of "crucify," I will ask them to provide a connotative meaning.

When we have uncovered the fact that most of us tend to look at crucifixion as a cruel and devastating act usually performed on someone innocent of the crime of which they are accused, and after having them compare their connotative definitions of crucify with the denotative ones found in the dictionary, I will ask the students to provide phrases they've heard which remind them of the definition given for our key word – crucible. I would expect to receive, most commonly, "tried by fire" and "I've come through the fire." This should provide the basis for a lively discussion which will draw in most of the students, and will easily segue into my asking them to predict – based on the definition of crucible, the phrases they've come up with related to it, and their discussions – what they think a play entitled *The Crucible* will be about, and what possible scenarios could be its subject.

To ensure participation, the students will be assessed on their contributions to these directed discussions. This assessment will be reflected in extra-credit points to be later added to one or more of their lower grades, thus helping them succeed in the grading cycle in which the study of this play will be the major assignment. These discussions will be focused on the definition of crucible and familiar phrases with similar meanings, as well as the historical aspects of witch hunts and the 'picking apart' of the play in terms of essential literary elements during oral reading of the play. During these discussions,

students will be encouraged to take notes to be used in the later exercises associated with the study of the play.

Literary Elements

The first of these exercises will be done immediately following the in-class reading of the play. From the notes taken during discussion, the students will be expected to prepare and turn in a typed, two-column notes chart, which lists the various literary elements in the first column and, in the second column, examples of the same from *The Crucible*. This chart will include comments on **setting** – *from time and place, through weather, to economic and political conditions*, **characterization** – *from name and appearance, through occupation and age, to frame-of-mind and motivation,* **diction** – *most especially its "semi-archaic" quality,* **plot** – *from exposition, through conflict and climax, to resolution,* and will end with the perspective or **point-of-view** from which the play is told (Ferres 16). Accompanying this chart will be a précis of the play, and a listing of the major themes with which the play deals.

"Since character, conflict and theme are intimately related, [the students will be asked to tell] ... the basic and elementary conflicts through which these themes are revealed". (Martine 44). They will begin with the classic man versus man, listing those relationships that are pertinent to the story's development that take this form. They will tell of Proctor's major struggles with other people in the play and with a much larger character, society. The students will also be asked to discern which of the characters in the story truly represent society rather than a person, and in what manner. They will then be asked to go beyond man versus man to look at man versus self, and detail Proctor's struggle in this aspect, giving its significance to the resolution of the play. Once we have taken a detailed look at conflict, we will be ready to delve into that rich well of theme in *The Crucible*.

One theme that the reader will find in most plays is the one dealing with the issue of good and evil, or morality. *The Crucible* is no exception. A subset of this theme is that of guilt. It is essential that the students look at these themes in the study of the play. And, in order to assess the behavior of the characters in these terms, the student must be able to identify those things that the members of the society portrayed in the play deem right and/or correct behavior and beliefs. Further, they will have to analyze how violating these mores lead to a character's strong feelings of guilt, feelings strong enough for the character to consider death as a remedy. From here, a natural progression of feelings from personal guilt to acceptance of blame to societal guilt followed by injustice should also be put under the microscope. The student will be asked to look at this progression and to tell what basic premise of American justice with which they are familiar is perverted and turned inside out in the play, with the result that the reverse becomes true (guilty until proven innocent). When this discussion is exhausted, the students will be asked to look at the themes of ignorance and fear, at how they are related and intertwined in The Crucible, and how they lead, inevitably, back to guilt. In this

case, the larger guilt of a society that has realized its wrongdoing and its terrible results – which have embodied evil and are truly "bad" – will be the object of scrutiny.

Key Question(s) and Directed Study

Having established a general direction, I will then pose a key question: What do we really mean when we say something is good? Using discussion, we will come up with categories of good that cover the gamut from good tasting and good looking to what does our family deem good and right and what does society say is good and right? We will follow this with a comparison/contrast exercise, which looks at how each of our particular branches of theology (or the religion each of us embraces) defines what is good and right. In this exercise we will discuss, then brainstorm, and eventually compile a list of what we agree constitutes morality in a civilized world. And, since my students represent the full spectrum of cultures, this should make for a stimulating discussion as they uncover the minor moral differences between each major "religion" and the startling similarities in the foundations of each when compared.

Using the criteria we establish from this discussion and taking into consideration Proctor's insistence on retaining his good name, we will ask the students to what major works does this concept allude. After answering this, the students will be expected to assess how the work relates to the society depicted in the play, then how the playwright's character(s) live up to his/her and society's expectations, or fall in the face of them. In making these assessments – considering faith, fidelity, and reputation among other aspects they feel pertinent – the students should also be able to trace the character's growth to grace, or the paths which lead him/her to the inevitable downfall, foretold by the fact that *The Crucible* is a literary tragedy "to those who feel" (Martine 80). This will be done in a timeline that delineates the same and the major events that cause them. These avenues should include the initial sin of Proctor's humanity. And, after tracing the avenues taken, the student should be able to provide the impact of the journey on the individual character and on the society in which he/she lives. It is then that they will be able to relate such an odyssey to their world and to discuss – orally and/or in written form – whether or not the effect on their world would be more or less serious than the impact made on the society in the play.

To facilitate such a discussion, the students will be asked to complete a project. The purpose of this project will be to depict a selected character visually in a manner of their choice from a silhouette formed from a collage or a doll sewn and stuffed which depicts how the student feels the character looks, to a full portrait painted by the student, to a video of various faces which when superimposed on each other represent the students view of their selected character. This visual depiction will be accompanied by a written character sketch in the form of a monologue (a skit if the project is done with a partner) created by the student to highlight the characteristic the student has found to be the one which best serves to 'define' that particular character. The student would then present this project to the class. To make for a more interesting presentation, and to ensure that

the class pays attention, the student will be prevented from simply telling what characteristic he/she is speaking to in the presentation. His/Her classmates will have to decide which trait they feel is being portrayed and support their decision with facts from the presentation which prove their assertion. This can be done as a paired-sharing project with a partner who portrays yet another character from the play. It is not, however, a viable group project. Too many characters presented at the same time would be confusing. The presentation is best done alone or with a partner. The second half of the project – a comparison of this character with a person or people from their world, public or private – is an assignment to be done individually, and will take the form of a focus exercise where the student will write a brief comparison-contrast essay showing the similarities and the disparities between the two. The students will be asked to be as descriptive as possible, to paint a picture with their words, as they link life to literature.

Historical Relevance

Once an assessment of the theme of good and evil has been made, students can, again, look to American history for examples of the same type of conflict. Each class will be broken up into three panels or groups to look at three events from history which speak to themes found in *The Crucible*. This is a research activity and each group will be asked to furnish an annotated bibliography to the class at the conclusion of their session. This bibliography will come into play later in the study of this unit; so, each group will be instructed to be as accurate and thorough as possible.

The first group will look at the Salem witch-hunts, the result of "a terrible, but perfectly natural, superstition" (Ferres 20). "We know that the New Englanders did not invent the belief in witchcraft ... a universally human belief [that] was an article of creed of everybody in the world, ... still held, in some form or other, and to a greater or less extent, by a large majority of mankind" (Ferres 20). However, the "... crime was recognized by the Bible, by all branches of the Church, by philosophy, by natural science, by the medical faculty, by the law of England" (Ferres 21). "Our forefathers believed in witchcraft, not because they were Colonials, not because they were New Englanders – but because they were men of their time" (Ferres 22). Further, "... under the Mosaic Law,... "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" was a well-known maxim and admonishment (Ferres 22).

"The most remarkable things about the New England prosecution were the rapid return of the community to its habitually sensible frame of mind and the frank public confession of error made by many of those who had been implicated. These two features ... are without a parallel in the history of witchcraft" and the group will be asked to remark upon this in "Inside/Outside" group discussions, and arrive at a conclusion, not about why such a terrible travesty came to pass, but rather why the populace so rapidly came to realize their suspicions were wrong, resolved the situation, admitted their guilt and recompensed the victims and/or their survivors (Ferres 23). The findings will be presented in a panel discussion format by the "Inside" group, with the information being presented first, followed by a question-answer session which they will conduct with the

rest of the class or the "Outside" group. Notes from these discussions will also be important later in the course of study for all of the students.

The second group of students will be asked to study events surrounding the hunt for communists spearheaded by McCarty. "Senator Joseph R. McCarthy became a focus of the uproar over Communists in Federal employment. In February 1950, he charged that the Department of State knowingly harbored Communists, and ... [in] this verbal combat with the State Department and others, ... quickly established the style of contention that was to be admired (or condoned) by his supporters and to be deplored and even feared by his opponents, a style of which the principal elements were recklessness in accusation, careless inaccuracy of statement, and abuse of those who criticized him" (Ferres 24). This had far-reaching results. "The Supreme Court upheld the conviction of the eleven top leaders of the Communist Party under the Smith Act of 1940. The Court also refused to review the convictions of two Hollywood writers who had declined to answer questions about possible Communist connections," and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg "...were sentenced to death." (Ferres 24-25).

"The first year of the Eisenhower era saw McCarthy at his peak. In the second he was brought down and condemned" (Ferres 25). "From 1950 to 1954, the activities of Senator McCarthy were an oppressive weight and pain to tens of thousands in government, politics, and the professions specifically, and within the articulate and better-educated circles of society generally. In America and abroad he became a symbol of mortal danger to liberal values and democratic processes" (Ferres 26).

"Taking an exalted view of the theatre's responsibilities and of the artist's function in society as the guardian of its conscience, Miller wrote *The Crucible* in the midst of the McCarthy era" (Ferres 28). Students will be asked to look at the McCarthy hunt for Communists, its result, and its direct impact on the life of Arthur Miller using a role-playing scenario to present their findings. Along with their findings, they will present an annotated bibliography to the class to be used later in this course of study. This presentation will also be followed by a question-answer session, and notes taken will be useful later.

The third group will review the more recent search for terrorists led by President Bush following the Twin Tower tragedy that occurred in New York City on September 11, 2001. They will be directed to periodicals and news clips that contain reports of the tragedy and its aftermath, as well as at the new wave of books spawned by the same. After gathering the information and refining it, they will be asked to present it to their class using a format similar to a news talk show. The presentation will end with a question-answer session with the audience, their classmates. Again, notes from this session will be instrumental in a later assignment.

These group presentations – a look at these three intriguing periods from American history – will underscore the truth that history oft times repeats itself. From this truth, cause and effect data can be taken for an analysis of the social phenomena of a witch-

hunt in a society where fear is allowed to be the driving force. Evaluating the result of such an outbreak of mass hysteria using this data, the students will be expected to take specific examples from history and trace the actions of the people involved and the results of their actions. They will be asked to tell whether the impact of the same was a growth in grace or a downfall from which the individuals could not recover. To further validate their assertions, the students will be required to support their conclusions with historical fact in the preparation of a research paper which can be turned in to both their Language Arts and American History teachers.

To prepare this paper, the students – as a class – will go to the library at least twice. The first library visit will be used to gather source information on index cards for possible use in the paper's required annotated bibliography. The second jaunt to the library will be used to garner excerpts from literary and historical criticisms to support their analyses of the play and its historical relevance. After this, the notes taken during and after the panel discussions (along with the annotated bibliographies provided by each group) will be put to use, serving to round out the material to be used in this research paper for which a series of assignments has built the data, beginning with the playwright's biography, which should serve as the introduction to the paper. And, aside from supporting the students' analyses, the literary criticisms and historical facts perused will provide the students a model for their papers. The paper will be rounded out by the students' articulate discussions which give reasoned conclusions of whether or not Miller's purpose for writing was realized, i.e. whether or not he was successful in imparting to the public those ideas and/or themes he felt particularly relevant.

And, as Trowbridge said, "In *The Crucible* there is also, for the first time in Miller's work, a genuine sense of exaltation; for in the struggles of John Proctor and the other martyrs to the cause of justice, we recognize our own victory over some of the worst elements of our Puritan past." This is something I want my students to realize. Not only do I want them to realize it, I don't want them to simply accept it because I, the teacher, say so. I prefer to guide them to the sources, and have them consider then accept the supporting evidence or dismiss it based on the finding of facts that refute it. Either outcome is acceptable to me because either shows the students thinking, reasoning, and evaluating rather than simply accepting at face value "because." And that – perhaps more than the knowledge gained – is, from this educator's perspective, the purpose of assigning a research paper at this level.

So, to ensure the students put as much of themselves into the preparation of this paper as possible, an incentive bonus under the title "Initiative" – of up to five possible points – will be added to their cycle grade. These points will be based on the evidence of the amount of material reviewed for possible inclusion in the paper (from the annotated bibliography of the first draft and the final copy of the paper), plus the editing of their draft (as evidenced in the polished, final copy of the paper), and the proper use of the MLA Style Sheet to format the sources cited both within the paper and in its bibliography.

Social/Psychological Significance

More subjectively, the students can use *The Crucible* to evaluate the societal impact of an individual's actions when they infringe upon the rights of another or of a group.

> With the Salem witch craft trials of 1692 as a moral frame and point of departure, Mr. Miller has gone on to examine the permanent conditions of the climate of hysteria. The New England tragedy was for him, dramatically, a fortuitous choice because it is accessible to us imaginatively; as one of the few severely irrational eruptions American society has witnessed, it retains still its primitive power to compel the attention. And it exhibits, moreover, the several features of the classically hysterical situation: the strange moral alchemy by which the accused become inviolable; the disrepute which overtakes the testimony of simple intelligence; the insistence on public penance; the willingness to absolve if guilt is confessed. It is imaginative terror Mr. Miller is here invoking: not the solid gallows and the rope appall him, but the closed and suffocating world of the fanatic, against which the intellect and will are powerless. (Ferres 32)

"His central figure is John Proctor, another spokesman for rational feeling ... disinterested intelligence. Proctor is so patently the enemy of the hysterical that his very existence is a challenge to the fanatic temperament, and he is consumed by its malice" (Ferres 33). Those "... who share the responsibility for bringing on the disaster are mentally static or unstable, however dynamic they might be in action. They continue to enforce blindly, to manipulate ruthlessly, or to follow fearfully sanctified standards of conduct even when to do so becomes absurd and destructive. Miller underlines their inflexibility by characterizing them in a mechanical fashion" (Ferres 41). A better example, one which also supports Miller's characterization, could probably be drawn if the students are asked to look at situations where reactions cause individuals to band together, eliciting actions which are contrary to those they hold dear. The students will be asked to consider incidents like the one that took place on September 22, 1906.

> ... a self-appointed leader mounted a dry goods box brandishing a newspaper extra which read in bold headlines "THIRD ASSAULT." "Are WHITE men going to stand for THIS?" the speaker asked rhetorically until the mob began to respond with "No! Save our Women!" and "Kill the niggers!" ... When the rioters – gentlemen, rabble and others – gained control of the street ..., they added to assault and murder … systematic destruction ... As a result ..., one white person died and several dozen were hurt. Twenty-five black men perished, about one hundred and fifty suffered serious wounds, hundreds had less critical injuries, and more than a thousand black men, women and children fled the city. (Finkelman 123-136)

One such reflective look at incidents like this one, which shows the forming of a collective will from an incendiary catalyst that causes individuals to forego customary actions, could make for an interesting psychological or sociological study of American history. And, using the aspect of prejudging people based simply on the words of another, the students can go from *The Crucible* to tangible examples in American history which have resulted from the same. An apt example of these would be the lynching of black men in the South, which were hailed as just punishment because someone said a white woman had been molested. One notable case in point to which thee students will be directed is the lynching of Cleo Wright, purportedly for attempting to rape a white woman with whom he was later said to have had an affair. This same woman was also said to have previously tried to have another black youth lynched for attempting "to quit her" (Finkelman 54). Defending the actions of the citizens who had beaten, shot, and then burned Wright "before hundreds of white men, women, and children," several "townspeople remarked that Wright had got what 'he had coming' and that they had taught him 'not to fool with white women'" (Finkelman 51, 54). They and those who had "spent their sabbath trekking pilgrim-like to view the scorched remains" would serve as an eye opening experience for the students as they delved into the psyche of the mob (Finkelman 50).

In a study of various incidents from American history like this one, which give an understanding of the writing of laws which amend and add to the Constitution, the students can study the effect of how unsubstantiated claims gain sway and lead to a mass hysteria. This mass hysteria often results in suspending the right to due process of the victims, many times with horrendous results. The students can then study how, like in *The Crucible* when the claims are found to be false, those involved have to deal with the results of their actions in the cold light of day. In a study of constitutional rights, and the reasons for and the value of the same, the students can hold a mock Federal trial using their findings as evidence. This would afford them the opportunity to gain an insight into the workings of the American judicial system. And those who find the violence of racially based hysteria offensive can take another look at the 'Red Scare' or America's offensive against communism within her borders. They can, for instance, look at 1919, when "Congress was ... deluged by petitions and pressure to deport alien radical and on December 21, 1919, 249 alleged radicals were deported. A few of the deportees were notorious and confirmed revolutionaries. The overwhelming majority, however, had neither criminal records nor had they participated in acts of terror. They were deported on the basis of political beliefs – not actions" (Levin 57). To show how this phenomenon spread so rapidly, the students can write newspaper articles that demonstrate the role played by this medium in this and like instances, highlighting the violation of the rights granted to the American citizenry. Incidents like the following can be used to comprise the data for the articles.

> On the evening of January 2, 1920, federal agents rounded up more than 4,000 alleged radicals in raids in thirty-three cities in twenty-three states.

> ... There is no doubt that the raids involved the violation of the civil rights of a few thousand people. Many arrests were made without warrants. Many prisoners were held incommunicado and denied the right to counsel ... Many of the men and women were American citizens. Many were not radicals. ... Federal agents and the police in several cities beat prisoners. (Levin 58)

As a project, these articles can be combined to form a class newspaper, which can be exhibited and/or distributed in their various related classes – Psychology, History, Journalism, and Sociology. Those with a photographic or artistic bent can provide the visual elements to such a chronicle, and those students who excel in technology can put the packet together to create the desired effect. In this way, a class project can be done. To make it more exciting, the various classes can enter their "newspapers" in a competition to be judged by their teachers and peers, with a prize of something like a class pizza party to inspire them to do their best work.

Creative Compositions and Enactments

On the Language Arts side of the coin, the students can further delve into the socio-psychological aspect of characterization by writing skits that not only show the trial, but also go beyond it into the emotions of those in its thrall – the defendants, the witnesses, the spectators, and those there representing the rights of the victims. Subsequent role-playing can show how authority and theocracy wend their way through the play. This can serve to shed light on not only how such actions can take place in a supposed civilized society, but also the results of the same on that society.

To further spark creativity, students can be asked to research and create skits of 20th century court cases which had a similar basis. Performance of these original skits with the subsequent heightening of emotions and tensions as they put themselves in the place of the characters as the story lines develop and progress will only serve to make the lessons learned a more integral part of the students. It will cease to simply be something to be studied for the test and then promptly forgotten. After having been mentally ingested and synthesized, it will be forever lodged into their learning centers and knowledge banks.

Motivation and Human Failings in Drama

Finally, since plays and playwrights fall under the auspices of Language Arts, the literary elements in them must be examined as many times and in as many ways as possible. One of these is a thematic study, which should be part and parcel of any study of literature and/or drama. As students look at *The Crucible*, they should be asked to link human traits and literary tragedies. Some of the issues that cause the frenzied witch-hunts and resultant trials are not without consideration. Some are not the result of simple hotheadedness. The students should be able to identify these instances. In an annual report, Major General Oliver Otis Howard (one time Commissioner of the Freedmen's

Bureau) said that "careful investigation has proved that the worst outrages were generally committed by small bands of lawless men, organized under various names, whose principal objects were robbery and plunder" (Finkelman 245).

So, where there is a desire for profit and/or a desire for vengeance in *The Crucible*, the students should be asked to put a Post-It marker and tell the "hows" and "whys" of the same, preferably in a two-column notes format. They can then relate each instance with a similar one from modern American history. Then, an exercise called the "Opposite Sides of the Same Coin" could be used to further the learning effort. In this exercise, for each example of fear leading to an atrocity, the students are asked to look for an accompanying example which has either profit or a desire for vengeance as its catalyst. To make the exercise even more appealing to the student, this can be done as a game serving as a refocusing exercise after an in-class silent reading session or as a closing exercise to wind down discussion. The extra points gained can be added to one or more of their lower grades, thus serving as further incentive to active participation.

CONCLUSION

Using such an approach, making the play relevant to today and the recent past, the student can be encouraged to look at literature as a mirror image of society and life as they know it. In this manner, such reading – active and lively – gains importance and an immediacy that a simple silent or dry, oral reading of the same for a test grade could not begin to hope to do. In this way, they will see that drama is a mirror. And this mirror is one in which our students will be eager to look into, and from which they will gladly gain a glimpse of knowledge that will merely whet their appetite for more. In this mirror they will view their songs, their dances, their sorrows, their joys, themselves, and their world, but from a safe distance. Through this mirror they will embrace this reflection of themselves, this partner, this erstwhile spouse called the theatre which dares to share in their experiences. A lifelong marriage will ensue, fulfilling and expansive; and stories will be lived and told and lived again, over and over and over. With this mirror an impact of a lifetime will be made, and the true teacher's dream realized. A dream that has been waiting in the wings to be, revealed in the words of the playwrights of yesterday, today, and tomorrow – by a teacher, to a student, for the human society, through drama, our partner on the stage of life. Drama is part of the parcel of that which we are. When we enable our students to see this, an unforgettable lesson will be taught, learning will occur.

LESSONS PLANS

Lesson Plan I

Objective

To demonstrate understanding of the relevance of titles to literary works. To make predictions based on the title and inferences garnered from evidence gathered through a cursory scrutiny of the work.

Focus
Exhibit a picture of a cauldron. Ask students to list those nouns brought to mind as they view the picture. (*10 minutes*)

Materials Needed
Class binder and a package of index cards.

Guided Learning
After the students have completed their lists, ask them to discuss them, eliminating and adding objects at will. When this has been done, define crucible. Then, ask students to pick from their list those activities that combine both the cauldron and the definition of crucible. For those who don't feel any of their listed objects "fit," have them select a new item that they feel does. Allow students to discuss their selections and their reasons for the same. Then ask them to predict what they feel a story will be about that contains a reason for a cauldron and a crucible. Have them support their predictions with logical reasoning. Then have them compile a list on the board in a brainstorming activity. When they have aired all of their choices, have them vote on which selection they feel would best be the subject of a play entitled *The Crucible*. Follow this discussion with a synopsis of the play, outlining the conflicts and themes in the play, and introducing them to the basic tenets of the times and the main characters. End the mini-lesson with an assignment to write a biography – with bibliography – of the playwright, Arthur Miller, a draft of which will be due the next class period on a block schedule. (*45 minutes*)

Independent Practice
In pairs, define the following new vocabulary words from Act I of *The Crucible*. Include a sentence from the play, with the page number on which it is found, using each vocabulary word. Use one index card per word. (*45 minutes*)

1. witchcraft	2. ne'er-do-well	3. conjure	4. sect
5. sect	6. ordinance	7. predilection	8. magistrate
9. parochial	10. theocracy	11. paradox	12. heathen
13. dissembling	14. abomination	15. signified	16. begrudge
17. faction	18. grievance	19. providence	20. parish
21. smirched	22. opportune	23. clamor	24. intimation
25. psalm	26. charm	27. province	28. afflict

Lesson Plan II

Objective
To explore the significance of the theme of good and evil in *The Crucible*, and to delineate how the definition of the same can differ within the work according to its application to different characters in the same work.

Focus
On the board, the key question – "What do we really mean when we say something is good?" – will be written. The students will be instructed to come up with categories of good. They will write these categories on the board. The students will then be asked to write those things they feel belong in each of these categories. (*10 minutes*)

Materials Needed
Class binder and copy of *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller.

Guided Learning
The students will discuss why they feel the selected categories are "good" and why they feel the objects they placed beneath them belong there. They will also be asked to indicate which of the items are what they and their family say is good and which of the items are what society deems good. After they have done this, they will be asked to discuss the differences between the categories placed in one subset as opposed to those placed in the other. They will be urged to verbally recall why they selected that subset and given the opportunity to change any placements they so desire. When the majority of the class has agreed upon a final grouping, the students will be asked to divide into groups of four (4) and evaluate the "types" of categories found in each subset. In these groups, they are to come up with explanations to account for the item's placement in the particular subset. (*45 minutes*)

Independent Practice
The students will be asked to write what they see as the difference between what society expects of them and what they expect of themselves based on what they have been taught by their families. They will be asked to give all of the influences brought to bear, like law enforcement and religion, in each of the two categories. And, they will be required to conclude their composition with their view of the difference between being a good citizen and being an individual who is a good person. (*30 minutes*)

Homework Assignment
Skim Act I of *The Crucible* and list those things deemed to be good by the Salem society portrayed in the play. In a separate column, list those things pointed out as "bad" or evil.

Lesson Plan III

Focus
Students will be asked to select from a list of literary terms those elements they feel must be included in a successful play. The directions will stress that their selections will be based on need for inclusion, not simply what *should* be present. The students will also be instructed to provide a reason for each selection they make which provides an explanation of why it is necessary. (*10 minutes*)

Objective
To identify and analyze the playwright's use of essential literary elements to fulfill his/her purpose for writing.

Materials Needed
Class binder, handout, and a copy of *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller.

Guided Learning
The students will be given a handout entitled "A Literary Study Guide," which I designed to help my students "pick a story to pieces." It has information arranged in a two-column notes or T-chart format. The first column has the essential literary elements listed, with a breakdown of the same. The second column is blank and has as its heading the title of the work being studied. The students will be instructed to fill in the information from the play in the second column that is requested in the first, as it is revealed during the oral reading of the play. As this handout will be used for other assignments, the students will be instructed not to write on the handout, but to recreate it on a sheet of paper. Most of the information gathered by the students will be shared by all as they will be instructed to raise their hands during the reading whenever they feel a pertinent piece of information has been provided. One point extra credit for each accepted entry will be awarded to the student who first offers it for consideration. The chart will include information as presented in Appendix A.

Following the daily reading of the play, the students will be asked to type the information gathered and save it on a diskette. They will do this after every class until the in-class reading is finished and the handout has been completed and transcribed. At that time, they will be instructed to turn in the T-chart for grading. (*60 minutes*)

Independent Practice
Students will be asked to select a character from the play and to trace his/her development during the course of the play. After the close of the oral reading for the day, each student will summarize what has been revealed about his/her character that day. These summaries will be compiled until the reading of the play is concluded; at which time the student will prepare a character analysis from them. This analysis will be turned in along with a project done by the student in which he/she visually depicts his/her selected character's most telling trait; i.e. that trait which the student feels best "defines" that particular character. This project can be anything ranging from a portrait to a silhouette formed in a collage to a hand puppet which depicts how the student feels that character "looks," inside or out. The analysis will be handed in for grading, and the projects will be presented in class as an accompaniment to a character sketch in the form of a monologue (or skit if the project is done with a partner).

APPENDIX A

LITERARY STUDY GUIDE

Literary Elements

I. Setting
- A. Time
  - 1. Year/Date
  - 2. Time of day
  - 3. Season
- B. Place
  - 1. Country
  - 2. City
  - 3. Urban/Rural
    - a. Size
    - b. Appearance
- C. Climate
  - 1. Weather
  - 2. Political
  - 3. Economic

II. Characterization *(Complete for each major character)*
- A. Name
  - 1. Proper
  - 2. Title *(if any)*
  - 3. Diminutive *(Nickname)*
- B. Description
  - 1. Physical Appearance
    - a. Age
    - b. Gender
    - c. Race
    - d. Significant Traits
      - (1)
      - (2)
- C. Personal History
  - 1. Intellectual Capacity and Education
  - 2. Economic Status and Occupation
  - 3. Mental Disposition *(Frame of Mind)*

III. Perspective
- A Point of View
  - 1. Person & Number
  - 2. Specific

IV. Plot
- A. Exposition *(Background Information)*
- B. Conflict or Problem *(complete for each)*
  - 1. Type *(man v. man, man v. nature, man v. supernatural...)*
  - 2. Specific
- C. Climax *(turning point/highest Point to which the action rises)*

Title of Work

I. Setting
- A. Time
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
- B. Place
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
    - a.
    - b.
- C. Climate
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.

II. Characterization
- A. Name
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
- B. Description
  - 1.
    - a.
    - b.
    - c.
    - d.
      - (1)
      - (2)
- C. Personal History
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.

III. Perspective
- A. Point of View
  - 1.
  - 2.

IV. Plot
- A.
- B.
  - 1.
  - 2.
- C.

D. Resolution *(How is problem solved?)* D.

THIS PORTION SHOULD BE IN COMPOSITION, RATHER THAN COLUMNAR FORMAT

V. Summary/Precis (Answer the following.)

A. What is the "story" about?
B. What caused the problem?
C. What was its effect?
D. How was it solved?
E. Your Personal Observations
    1. Did you like the "story?" (Why?/Why not?)
    2. What do you think was the author's purpose in writing the story?
        a. Was it to highlight theme of:
            (1) Life and death?
            (2) War and peace?
            (3) Love –
                (a) Happily ever after?
                (b) Unrequited?
                (c) Star-crossed?
            (4) Justice?
            (5) Revenge?
            (6) Greed?
            (7) Other?
        b. Was it –
            (1) To inform?
            (2) To ridicule?
            (3) To entertain?
    3. Do you feel the author was successful in meeting his purpose? (Why?/Why Not?)

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