

Module 4: Drama in American Literature

Topic 4 Content: Literature Review Act One

Introduction

Literature Review Act One

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Use the *NEXT* button or the numbered tabs at the bottom to review the character dilemmas and the opposition that each character faces. Are there any other conflicts that you foresee playing out in the court later on in the play?



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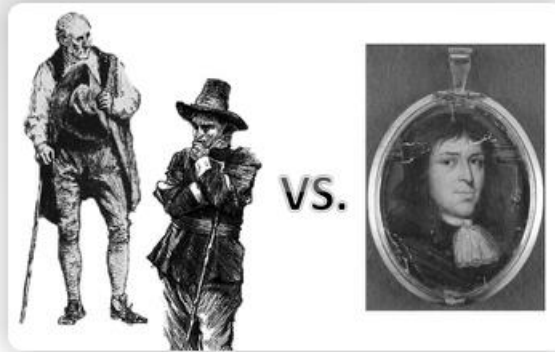
Topic 4 Content: Literature Review Act One

Corey/Proctor Versus Parris

Literature Review Act One

Corey/Proctor Versus Parris

With the backdrop of the sick girls, other conflicts are revealed. You learn that Giles Corey and John Proctor do not think favorably of Reverend Parris. They are dissatisfied with his constant preaching of hell and damnation. They are also unhappy that he demanded the deed to his house, which belongs to the congregation. He also disputes his pay and insists on firewood on top of the six pounds they pay him per year for firewood. The Puritans should not covet worldly possessions, yet many of these characters in the play are concerned with just that: land and money.



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Mrs. Putnam Versus Rebecca

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Mrs. Putnam Versus Rebecca

Another conflict is found between Ann Putnam and Rebecca Nurse. Mrs. Putnam is distraught that she has lost so many children in childbirth and is willing to believe the girls because she needs someone or something to blame. Rebecca feels the girls are just acting, and she herself has many grandchildren. You also learn that Mrs. Putnam sends her daughter, Ruth, to Tituba, the Barbados slave familiar with alternative religious practices, which Ann believes will conjure the spirits of her dead babies. In a desperate attempt to save herself from being accused of witchcraft, Goody Putnam accuses Rebecca and Tituba as the people responsible for her stillborn babies.



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Abigail Versus John Proctor

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Abigail Versus John Proctor

This conflict, which focuses on the relationship between John and Abigail, is intriguing because of its ambiguity. Abigail worked at his household and during that time, there might have been romantic feelings between them. It has been many months now, but Abigail still longs for him and expresses her dislike of Elizabeth. John denies that anything happened between him and Abigail.



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Corey/Proctor Versus Putnam

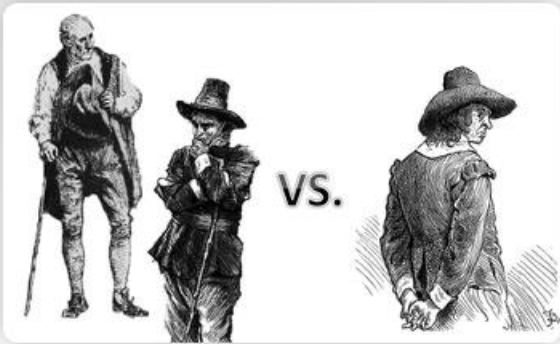
Literature Review Act One

Corey/Proctor Versus Putnam

Giles Corey and John Proctor are two prominent men in Salem Village who have a conflict over land with Thomas Putnam. Because records were not kept as accurately as they are today, land boundaries were up for interpretation. As you can see in Act One, Proctor and Corey dispute land boundaries with Putnam.

Proctor: [speaking to Putnam] Your grandfather had a habit of willing land that never belonged to him, if I may say it plain.

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Proctor: [speaking to Putnam] Your grandfather had a habit of willing land that never belonged to him, if I may say it plain.

Giles: That's God's truth; he nearly willed away my north pasture but he knew I'd break his fingers before he'd set his name to it. Let's get your lumber home, John. I feel a sudden will to work coming on.

Putnam: You load one oak of mine and you'll fight to drag it home!

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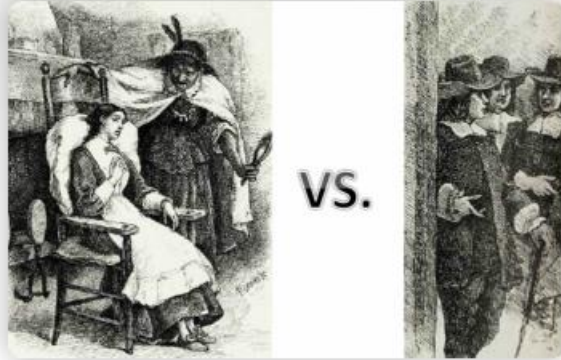
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Tituba Versus Society

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Tituba Versus Society

Tituba is a pivotal character in this play. She is another character that begins the finger-pointing to save herself. Because she is a slave, the Puritans immediately blame her and then force her to confess.



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