

## How does the director of The Crucible make use of the medium of film to bring over the power of the drama?

'The Crucible' a modern drama by Arthur Miller, is a moving play about one man's struggle to stand up for what he knows is right. In 1996 a film was made of the play with Miller writing the screenplay. In the film Hytner (the director) is aiming to catch the power and the emotional impact of the original drama. I am going to look closely at the scene where Elizabeth Proctor is charged as being a witch and at the last scene. I hope to show how Hytner has brought the play to life by using different camera angles and music.

### The Scene in Which Elizabeth is Taken away

I am going to write about this scene from where the court officials come to search the Proctors' house.

There is a very still silence as they enter the house. Before this there was a very heavy drum beat pounding in the background. It was like Elizabeth's heart beating because it was so fast and nervous. Now the danger is in her very house and the heartbeat has stopped.

In the house all the candles are casting queer shadows on the wall which makes the atmosphere a little bit edgy because it is so dark. The camera sits in the darkest corner from time to time, watching all that goes on. It almost like there is something hiding in the corner, maybe an animal. The camera gives us a view of what each different person is seeing. The only noise at this time is the night birds outside which add an almost sinister air to the proceedings.

The people in the room are filmed standing together - Elizabeth and John, Hale and Cheever. The tension steadily mounts until it climaxes when the puppet is found with the needle stuck in it. The music starts up again as Mary is called down and questioned. The camera stays on her alone so we can see how she reacts to everything.

As the scene proceeds the music crescendos as Elizabeth realises that she must be taken away. When she goes to say goodbye to her boys the music becomes tender and sorrowful. The camera looks on at them as if we are standing in the room nearby to them. As she walks strongly away from them the music once again becomes sinister and woeful.

Outside the camera angles and noise all change suddenly from being calm and moving to being frantic and crazy. There is a lot of noise and confusion as her boys launch themselves at the people who are taking her away. The music quietens momentarily until they start to chain her when it all starts again with John shouting.

When the cart has left the strings are still playing, ominously. John

screams at Mary and we see her rocking back and forth crying pathetically that she can't do it go- to court against Abigail.

We see John from below looking upwards with the moonlight glinting off his face, casting shadows in the wrong places. He stares morosely before beginning his speech, ending ,  
“ and Gods icy wind will blow.”

## The Last Scene

This scene starts with Elizabeth asking to see John. We then see two solitary figures silhouetted against a purple sky. It is as if we are seeing through Danforth's eyes. It is a good way to show the solitariness of Elizabeth and John. From the way are seeing them they are apart from each other and seem awkward. The camera then closes up on Elizabeth and John so we can see the expression on their faces. This dispenses the idea that they are awkward with each other because they both look so happy that you can easily see that they love each other. There is no music and all there is to listen to be the sound of the sea and the conversation that John and Elizabeth are having. The camera adjusts from looking at John's face to looking at Elizabeth's face every couple of seconds. This is so we can see their entire face and expressions. It is almost like we are seeing what they are seeing. There is the occasional long shot from the direction of where the judges are standing which just reminds you just how serious the whole situation actually is.

There is no music in this scene until John asks Elizabeth to forgive him when the string section of the orchestra come in playing a haunting melody hopeful yet at the same time desperately miserable. The music perhaps is a little like John's feelings. As he and Elizabeth embrace we see her view of the judges waiting to hang him. We then see John and Elizabeth hugging so tightly that they almost look like one person and see the sky behind them has lightened and is developing into a beautiful new dawn. This does not seem very suitable but then John turns and as the music crescendos he almost screams, "I want my life! " Then we can see the relevance of having the new dawn in the background; he is not going to die!

The music stops as we see Danforth's serious face. As he questions Procter there is no noise bar the wind. The camera changes, looking from face to face so we can see all of their expressions.

The music starts again as the questioning goes on and John denies ever seeing anyone with the Devil. It becomes more and more sinister until it climaxes when Procter signs. Then, suddenly the music stops and all there is to hear is the sound of the quill scratching against the parchment. We can hear John's laboured breathing and as he finishes signing the camera closes up on his

face so we can see the full extent of his anguish. It is shot like this so we can understand how much it pains John to sign the confession.

When the Judges ask for the confession Proctor refuses to give it to them. The camera pans around then looks at each person in turn as they speak. The camera acts very erratically, which adds to the growing tension. The music starts very softly so that you can barely hear it but it adds even more to the rising tension. It all climaxes as the camera focuses on John alone and he screams, almost hysterically "Because it is my name!!!!" The music is full of despair in place of the earlier, more sinister music. The camera turns and we see Hawthorn's passive face before turning back to see John tear the confession in half, heaving a huge sigh as he does so. Elizabeth cries out and buries her face in her hands as the almost joyful music crescendos. This music becomes darker as we see Hawthorn's still unmoved face. It does this because he is a man that has condemned so many innocent people to die. It works very well to do this because you are reminded of all the other people who have died for being innocent.

The music becomes much more desperate as Proctor is taken away. The camera follows the cart, rattling along. We see it from all angles until finally we see it from the view of the market place. The music quietens slightly and we can hear the women crying and blessing them and the men praying. Quite a few times we see through Proctor's eyes at the beautiful new day that has dawned and at the faces of the people in the crowd.

As they mount the scaffold we see it from their point of view as they are going up the steps. Hytner repeats this with each person. When they are on the scaffold the camera follows the faces of Rebecca and Francis so you are reminded that the main story is not the only story. The camera then looks at the scaffold straight on and the music stops as they start to say the Lords Prayer. One by one they are pushed off and the camera focuses on John's face. Then, there is a thud as John is pushed off and you are left looking at a gently creaking rope. This is extremely effectively filmed. It totally shocks you. This film is made substantially more powerful by the director's clever filming which makes it seem very real. Without such imaginative music and camera shots the film would not be as poignant and touching as it was.

This film was filmed in a very imaginative and thought provoking way. Before I wrote this piece I had not realised how much thought had been put into the camera angles and music to make the film effective. The director, using camera angles and music, brought over the power of the drama excellently to create an intensely moving film.