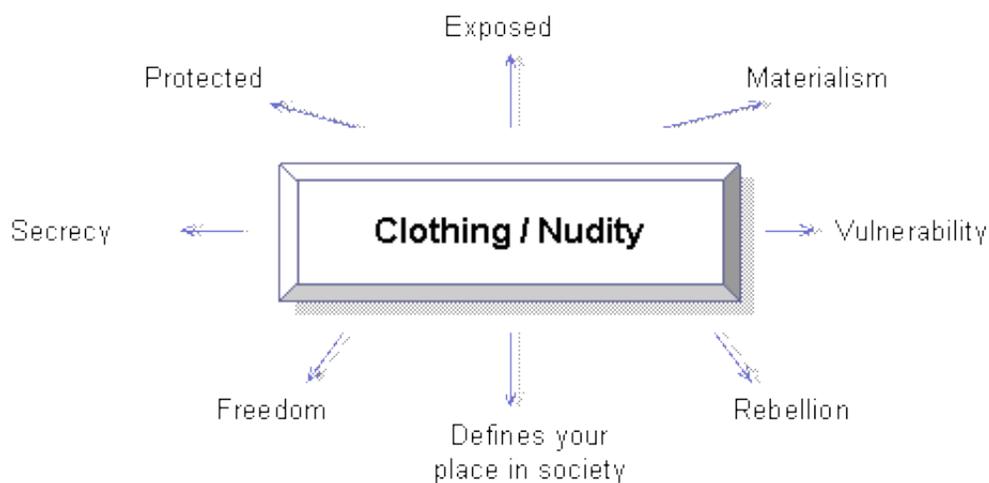


Motif Tracking: The Crucible – Clothing & Nudity



Quotations:

Page	Quotation	Explanation
Act 1, pg 20	"I saw a dress lying on the grass."	This quotation can be linked with the motif of inside vs. outside where the inside has connotations of being civilised and proper, while the outside has connotations of being unknown and wild. The dress lying outside in the forest on the grass shows how the girls have less regard for the rules when they are outside. This lack of clothing then reflects being less restricted by the strict expectations that the Puritan society had for them.
Act 1, pg 20	"And I thought I saw – someone running naked through the trees!"	This quotation is from when Parris is describing the singing and dancing that he had witnessed the night before. The lack of clothing here is associated with frivolity and being free from the strict Puritan society. The discarding of the clothing again symbolises the girls disregarding and breaking free of the rules.
Act 1, pg 20	"I have given you a home, child, I have put clothes upon your back"	Although in the previous quotations, clothing is portrayed as being restrictive and perhaps suffocating, her clothing is presented as being, in a way, a 'saving grace'. Parris feels that he had rescued Abigail from a life of poverty and hardship by giving her a home and clothes and 'civilising' her.
Act 1, pg 40	"It is the Devil working again, just as he is working within the Slav who is shocked at the very idea of a woman's disrobing herself in a burlesque show."	This quotation shows how nudity or not being modestly covered up is seen to be the work of the Devil and the audience can see how the characters in the play immediately associate dancing naked to be communing with the Devil. To "disrobe" gives the image of being uncivilised, animalistic, and ungodly and therefore may be why being naked is seen to be an act of rebellion against God and all Puritan values. In the same way that being naked is not really sinful the audience realises that the girls' behaviour in the woods is not really a great crime. However, the seriousness with which this relatively harmless activity is treated shows how the Salemites no longer have a realistic grasp of the difference

		between right and wrong in the same way that modern Americans of the 1950s had lost all sense of perspective when faced with the Communist threat.
Act 1, pg 48	"...I make you free! I give you pretty dress to wear..."	Tituba is a Negro servant, she is of a lower status than the other characters in the play and this quotation reveals how clothes are a symbol of status and for Tituba to obtain a "pretty dress" would be to elevate her status in society and to some degree, give her a sense of freedom.
Act 2, pg 75	"...we are only what we always were, but naked now. Aye, naked! And the wind, God's icy wind, will blow!"	<p>This quotation suggests that there have been lies and secrets in Salem that have allowed people to pretend to be something that they are not, however now that the lies and secrets have been uncovered, they are "naked" and exposed to "God's icy wind". This harsh, cruel image illustrates the extent to which their lies and secrets ('clothes') have protected them and their reputation and image and that now people will be vulnerable as this protection is no longer there.</p> <p>This image is particularly significant for Proctor as he actually welcomes this exposure to God's (unforgiving) judgement – the sense that he embraces this opportunity to be damned for his sins emphasises how disgusted he is with himself for his affair with Abigail and how he is yet to forgive himself for his actions. This reinforces Elizabeth's later point that Proctor is his own most unforgiving judge.</p>
Act 3, pg 81	Stage directions: <i>reaching into his jacket</i>	In this scene, Proctor is reaching into his jacket to pull out Mary's deposition. Clothing usually has connotations of secrecy and covering up something. However, this proves to be wrong in this case, as the deposition is in fact truth and not lies.
Act 3, pg 94	"I never saw any of them naked."	Parris constantly denies seeing the girls dancing naked, although the audience know from Act 1 that Parris did see a girl running naked through the forest. His lies reflect Parris' cowardly and self-serving nature. He is more concerned with saving himself and his reputation than with telling the truth.
Act 4, pg 107	Stage directions: <i>rising in her rags</i>	The rags her represent the state of disorder and chaos within Salem following the destruction wrought by Abigail and the court.

Key Moment:

The motif of clothing vs. nudity in the play provides the contrast between being symbolically covered up and being 'naked'. While being clothed has connotations of being civilised and modest and God-fearing, it can also have connotations of secrets or lies being covered up and hidden. Similarly to this, the lack of clothing or being naked would bring to mind rebellion and freedom. However, being naked also means being exposed, vulnerable, and sinful. In *The Crucible*, Miller makes use of these contrasts: the dual readings of being clothed echo how those who are civilised are in fact the most corrupt while the dual readings of nudity reveal how those who are honest are accused of rebellion and are ultimately left vulnerable and attacked. This absurd distortion of values in the Salem witch hunt is meant to reflect Miller's condemnation of the values of 1950s America which he sees as having been equally distorted by the hysteria created by the fear of Communism.