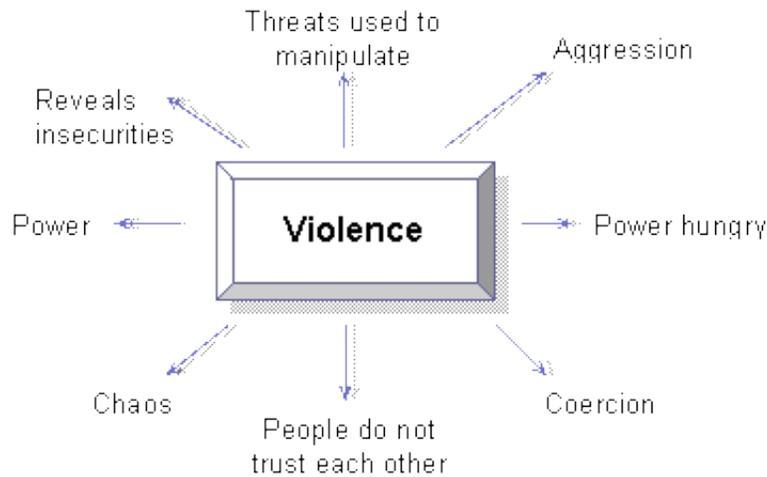


The Crucible: Motif Tracking – Violence



Summary:

Throughout Arthur Miller's "The Crucible" we discover how a small community in Salem is stirred into madness by superstition, paranoia and false accusations, all of which lead into a violent climax. The theme of violence is evident and significant throughout as the play demonstrates a savage attack on a gratuitous and ignorant society.

Quotations:

Page	Quotation	Explanation
24 & 46	<p>"Have you tried beatin' her? I gave Ruth a good one..." –Mercy.</p> <p>"...I will take you out and whip you to your death" – Parris"</p> <p>This woman must be hanged! She must be taken and hanged!" – Putnam</p>	<p>Miller makes it evident that the people of Salem find violence an answer: it is used to resolve things and is constantly used to manipulate others, intimidate others and punish. Throughout the play it drives the plot forwards as people, to avoid being whipped or hanged, make false accusations of others thus making violence a pivotal theme and a major cause of the hysteria created.</p>
26	<p>"We danced. And Tituba conjured Ruth Putnam's dead sisters. And that is all. [If] you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things . . . I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you" - Abigail</p> <p>"[She sits Betty up and furiously shakes her.] I'll beat you Betty!"</p> <p>"[Smashes her across the face], Shut it! Now shut it!"</p> <p>"I saw Indians smash my dear parents' heads on the pillow next to mine...I can make you wish you had never seen the sun go down" – Abigail</p>	<p>Throughout the play Abigail illustrates her aggressive, stubborn and violent nature. She threatens violence against all the girls if they speak the truth. Her manipulative and aggressive nature allows her to intimidate others. The repetition of 'shut it' and the violence of 'smashes' shows her confidence and power.</p> <p>These violent actions are only done when the girls are present, which shows that Abigail uses pretense to present her character as a well-behaved girl in normal company, thus the theme of deceit and the importance of appearance is also introduced.</p>

<p>30 & 59</p>	<p>"[<i>Shaking her</i>]: Do you look for whippin'?" –Proctor</p> <p>"I'll whip the devil out of you! [With whip raised he reaches out for her] – Proctor</p> <p>Proctor: "I'll official you! [he strides to the mantel, takes down the whip hanging there]"</p> <p>Mary: "[terrified but stands erect, striving for her authority] I'll not stand whipping any more!</p>	<p>Proctor clearly has an aggressive and violent side to his personality too; however unlike Abigail he isn't vilified, Miller manages to present Proctor in a positive light as he in fact a struggling ordinary character and is someone the audience can relate to. His aggressive and violent nature, whenever evident, is justified by Miller and the quotations in their context demonstrate this, for example the first quotation is addressed to Abigail who is in fact attempting to seduce him, justifying his violent remark.</p> <p>In addition, the fact that Proctor has the power within the house reveals shows that there are status rankings in the society. It also reflects how threatening to whip servants seems like a common practice. The oppression of women is also apparent here and if a feminist view is applied to this situation, we feel sympathetic towards Mary as she is daily faced with these threats if she doesn't obey what Proctor says.</p>
<p>74</p>	<p>"[grasping her by the throat as though he would strangle her]...[He throws her to the floor, where she sobs, 'I cannot, I cannot...']"</p>	<p>Again, the power of Proctor in particular and men in general is shown here. This violence shows his desperation to get his wife back but may also reflect his feeling helpless and hopeless at this point.</p>
<p>88</p>	<p>"I'll cut your throat, Putnam, I'll kill you yet!" –Giles</p>	<p>The extreme sense of hostility and violence is evident specifically in the climatic scenes of the play, as the characters brutally threaten each other, emphasizing the presence of the theme violence throughout the play.</p>
<p>88 89 87</p>	<p>"Giles Corey makes a rush for Putnam. Proctor lunges and holds him."</p> <p>"... restraining all his fears, his anger ...]"</p> <p>'Furious, his fists clenched'</p>	<p>However, Ironically, despite the intense, aggressive climaxes, ultimately, all violence is in fact restrained. It is evident that despite their fury and despite appearing belligerent there is no literal violence that takes place, as the characters are constantly restrained by others or by their self-control, in order to not risk their positions.</p>

Key Moments:

In Act 3, the motif of violence reaches its climax as Giles Corey, Proctor, Hale, Parris and Danforth are all in Salem Meeting house, the court. Emotionally it is a climatic scene and it is evident that the characters, specifically Giles is acting on impulse "Corey makes a rush for Putnam". He appears extremely aggressive even preparing to attack Putnam; until Proctor restrains him "Proctor lunges and holds him". The violence helps create a sense of climax and also illustrates the desperation of these fundamentally good men when fighting against the corruption of the court. Proctor's self control as he restrains his anger helps mark him out as a passionate but reasonable man, a hero in contrast to the misguided characters surrounding him.

Another key moment is in Act 2 when "[grasping her by the throat as though he would strangle her]... [Proctor throws her to the floor, where she sobs, 'I cannot, I cannot...']" This quotation reveals how Proctor's guilt has taken him to such an extreme that he is now very violent with Mary Warren as he wants to save his wife Elizabeth. Miller clearly intends to present Proctor as the hero but we can perhaps also see him as a violent man, because he ill treats people lower in status to him like Mary Warren. We can also see his anger at the figures of Authority (symbolized by Mary who is a representative of the court) as they have taken away Elizabeth and thus this may foreshadow his later challenge of that

court. Finally the violence of Proctor's actions also reveal the violence of Proctor's own internal struggle as he battles to accept himself as a man who has sinned but is still, nonetheless, good.