

Show how RELATIONSHIPS were important (or not important) in your studied text.

Advised to spend 40 minutes on this & write 300 – 400 words for your answer.

Relationships play a critical role in Arthur Miller's political parable, "The Crucible". It is the relationships, both good and bad, between key characters of the play which drives the drama along ultimately to its tragic conclusion – the hanging of a number of innocent people, falsely accused of witchery in the late 1600s. Miller's play primarily focuses on the honest and well-respected (but human) John Proctor as its protagonist and it is his relationship with two women which initially causes the mass hysteria which drives the drama along, finally leading to Proctor's death himself.

Proctor is a man guilty of "lechery", of adultery with the "strikingly beautiful" 16 year old Abigail Williams. This illicit relationship is short-lived but the shame it brings the good-but-momentarily-weak Proctor lingers. He is disgusted with himself for breaking his own morals and principles, things that count for much in the deeply religious Puritan community that is Salem. His shame is deepened by the knowledge that his faithful and honest wife is aware of his affair; try as they might to try and repair the deep wound in their relationship, reminders of the shame seems to keep them apart and frustrated.

The antagonist, Abigail Williams is unwilling to let go of her lust for Proctor who has already shunned her and feeds her school-girl crush by wishing his wife, Elizabeth Proctor dead. This nasty-but-innocent act gets misinterpreted as witchcraft and is soon used by Abigail to indeed try to remove Goody Proctor as the supposed obstacle between her and Proctor. It is this 16 year old's misplaced love that causes hysteria and mayhem as she shows her callous, cruel and remorseless nature in spreading the fear that witches are living amongst Salem. As lies spread and lives get lost she never once waivers from her task: to have John Proctor for herself.

Elsewhere within the play, ill-tempered relationships are everywhere and fuel the culture of finger-pointing which quickly develops. The Reverend Samuel Parris is an unpopular figure within the town with most villagers and uses the hysteria to deflect criticism of his own household; the villager Thomas Putnam argues over his land constantly and is accused of using the panic in Salem to get rid of his enemies.

Everywhere within this play broken, misplaced and uneasy relationships exist, helping to feed the tense atmosphere that runs throughout "The Crucible".

392 words!!