
Presence Of Pride In The Main Character Of The Book The Crucible

A sentiment of one's own value or a sense of excessive conceit, pride is the fatal flaw of which leads to his destruction, yet shepherds Proctor's redemption. Although hidden throughout most of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, pride is an underlying force that drives most of Proctor's decisions in the play. Being prideful of his reputation and name while being driven by guilt, John Proctor would rather be put to death and redeemed than live in the shadow of shame.

First, reputation, a building block of the Puritan society, is the belief or opinion that are generally held about someone or something. Having too much pride to admit to the community that he and Abigail had an affair, Proctor keeps this information to himself until his reputation is on the line. He and Elizabeth talk about the foolishness of the trials when John admits "[Abigail] told it to me in a room alone...for a moment I say. The others come in soon after" (Miller 2.130-133). John confesses his adultery to Elizabeth, but she clearly still distrusts her husband. The confession changes Elizabeth's outlook at her husband, and in turn Proctor feels convicted. He knows that she now distrusts him and believes he is lying. To rebuild his pride in himself and Elizabeth's trust in him, Proctor makes an excuse trying to put their strife at rest. He holds a large piece of his pride in his name and how highly his family is thought of and he does not want marks or issues within his family. Although he does care about his marriage, he is more driven by the amount of respect his name carries. Proctor also wants to end their strife because Elizabeth holds his adultery against him and she could turn him into the courts.

Likewise, as John is interrogated by the court in order to save his wrongly accused wife, Proctor realizes that he alone can save his wife. Proclaiming his secret relations with Abigail to public and the court, John turns the court against Abigail as the allegation reveals her motive to kill Elizabeth. Proctor, breathless and in agony, proclaims "[Abigail] is a whore," but the court demands proof which forces Proctor, as he trembles, admits "I have known her, sir. I have known her" (Miller 3.835-842). Broken and exposed, Proctor finally reveals his secret affair to the court. Danforth, dumbfounded, asks a few questions in hopes that the confession would be a lie. In this moment, Proctor feels guilty and a lack of pride in his past actions, but continues to plea his wife's innocent by saying "you will believe me, Mr. Danforth! My wife is innocent, except she knew a whore when she saw one" (Miller 3.875-877). As Proctor pleads and confesses, he lacks a sense of pride in himself, but is driven by his guilt and is prided in his wife's immaculate reputation. After his confession, Proctor feels devastated. Since the disgraceful incident occurred, he had been able to keep this secret to himself and rot in guilt. Proctor is miserable as he confesses, but is driven by the guilt he holds and is using this confession almost as an apology in hopes to feel a sense of redemption.

In addition, in the town of Salem, your good name is the only way one can get others to do business with them or even get a fair hearing the the court. Proctor's self-worth is entirely tied up in his name and how others perceive him. Proctor is willing to confess and sign the confession to save his wife, but when the court officials try to take the confession away to show to the whole town, he backs down. Proctor cries out "Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I lie and sign myself to lies! Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang! How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave

me my name!' (Miller 4, 725-730). The court wanted his name as a show of power, but Proctor, being prideful of his name and shameful of his actions, didn't want the dirt of his confession staining his name. His title carries power and a sense of purity, and after being stained with his actions, Proctor's name is now looked down upon as he is seen as guilty. Proctor also pleads "Because it speaks deceit, and I am honest! But I'll plead no more! I see now your spirit twists around the single error of my life, and I will never tear it free!" (Miller 2. 415-418). Proctor carries such shame in regards to his affair that he snaps as he backlashes against the court. He sees that they are focused on his affair and getting his confession, and not his well-being and forgiveness. Proctor cannot bear to have his reputation be smeared with this confession of witchcraft, because if his reputation is damaged then he no longer can think well of himself. His cry for empathy shows that the shame he carries with his sin had eroded the pride he had for himself and his reputation.

Also, Proctor is so shameful of his actions that he is broken down and is grasping on to the one thing he has left, his dirtied name. Although he clings to the little pride he has in himself, he has a change of character. Ready to lay down his life to save his name, Proctor seems to have lifted a weight off of his shoulders by confessing. During the trials, he also seems to come to the conclusion that he does not want to carry all of the sin now tagged to his name and accepts his fate. In another piece written by Miller titled "Tragedy of the Common Man" he says that "the tragic feeling is evoked in us when we are in the presence of a character who is ready to lay down his life, if need be, to secure one thing--his sense of personal dignity." This quote directly relates to the emptiness that Proctor feels after he is convicted and is left solely with his dirtied name that he once took so much pride in. At this point of Proctor's journey, he seems to not be afraid of the thought of death as if he believes it is his only portal to redemption.

Lastly, Proctor walks boldly to the consequences his past actions caused without remorse for his them. After his confession, he does not refuse death, nor does he seem scared of it. Lifting the weight of sin off of his shoulders, Proctor's confession opened the door to redemption and acceptance of his life that had not been opened before. Preceding his death, Proctor says to the court "his eyes full of tears...You have made your magic now, for now I do think I see some shred of goodness in John Proctor" (Miller 4. 746-748). Even though Proctor knows he is going to face death for the actions he has committed, he sees a glimpse of goodness and redemption. The weight of confession and shame is a lot to take for someone who takes so much pride in his reputation, but his pride and confidence inclines after his confession as he feels released from sin's shackles. He sees the road leading to death before him as the consequence to his actions and a way to be freed of his sins, not a ruthless punishment for witchcraft and his affair.

Therefore, Proctor, the flawed tragic hero, is driven by his pride which leads him in making the choices he made throughout the play, eventually leading to his death. From confessing to Elizabeth and the court, to ultimately lying about witchcraft all while battling with shame as it clung to his feet, Proctor was driven by his pride with the goal of self redemption. Proctor can't let go of his affair that binds him. He feels that death is the only way he may be able to reconcile with his sin and mistake, and more importantly with himself. Although the Centuries change, the moral building blocks remain. People must be honest with themselves and reach their own self redemption, even if that means risking their lives for the sake of their own good.