
Self-reflection, Responsibility for Mistakes, and the Power of Integrity in "The Crucible" by Arthur Miller

In Author Miller's book *The Crucible*, there are many passages of literature that can teach us valuable life lessons. The characters portrayed in this novel all seem to have their own interpersonal issues, but one character seems to stand out. John Proctor is a troubled character and continues to contribute toward his own downfall. It isn't until the last play when John Proctor finally regained his self-respect, and paid the ultimate sacrifice. Proctor's character shed knowledge and life lessons on his audience such as the importance of self-reflection, taking responsibility for one's own mistakes, and the power of integrity.

Self-reflection is held and created in the mind of an individual, and serves as the way that person sees themselves. We all see ourselves in a different manner than those who see us and we are responsible for how we see ourselves. Our actions, beliefs, and our sense of belonging all contribute to our self-perseverance. *The Crucible* portrays many different aspects of self-reflection, the most notable being John Proctor's character. However, Proctor's self-reflection diminished rapidly due to his affair with Abigail. In the book *The Crucible*, John Proctor says, "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 133). Here, Proctor is refusing to testify because he's standing with his self-image. Only if John Proctor had stayed true to his self-image would the affair be non-existent, but his life would be spared.

Taking responsibility for one's own actions seems to be a very rare occurrence in *The Crucible* and even in today's society. The media is constantly covering issues with politics, and the mistakes made within the government. More specifically, the media is currently covering presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, and the lies upon lies she is creating to try and cover her tracks. Between John Proctor, and Hillary Clinton it could be concluded that they are relative in some way. However, only one admitted to his wrong doing thus far. Perhaps if John Proctor took responsibility for his actions earlier in the book, the repercussions of his actions would not be so severe. Also, maybe Hillary Clinton can use Proctor's experience to help her understand the importance of owning up to her own mistakes. His mistakes started with Abigail Williams, and led to a downhill spiral or slippery slope, significantly worsening the situation. This life lesson can apply to anyone, as everyone makes mistakes.

When Proctor finally admits to his affair with Abigail Williams, he showed that integrity still remained within his morals. The power of his integrity, saved his wife Elizabeth from death.

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Also, Proctor concludes that if he keeps this secret, he will be acting like a coward and the end result would be betraying his wife again. Arthur Miller set a heavy emphasis on John Proctor's integrity, pushing the importance onto the readers or audience. Integrity is not instilled into each and every person and it is very apparent that today's society is filled with integrity violators. Today, people with no sense of integrity can run for president, be president, and fail to be prosecuted for excessive integrity violation. Reading *The Crucible* during this point in time sheds extreme concern for society as a whole. In 1692 integrity was treated in a more serious matter than it is today, and it shows completely. Arthur Miller's life lesson here is, have integral pride and do not be afraid to tell the truth.

Self-reflection, owning up to mistakes, and one's integrity are just very few of many traits that stood out to the audience as a learning experience. The events of the crucible, and the literature in the book brings a different perspective for its audience, once correlation is devolved in similarity 1692 to 2016. Even though John Proctor is 324 years old, his reflection, mistakes, and integrity are still easily recognizable in most aspects of today's society.

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