

# Boy staunton and abigail williams: similarities between davies' and miller's char...

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Everyone has their own desires and how they act on how they try to acquire those wants depend on each individual and on which unconscious archetype they rely on. Carl Jung presents the idea of Jungian Archetypes in which he explores where individuals try to based their decisions on. Robertson Davies' Fifth Business and Arthur Miller's The Crucible published in 1970 and 1953, respectively, explore the lives of the characters that have lived or once lived in a small town. The two literary works analyze how the unfolding of the events affect the personality and traits of each character. A character analysis from both works enable one to connect and relate the similar characteristics with each other. This is evident in the two novels as Boy Staunton and Abigail exhibit similar traits in which they are driven by their ids throughout their own stories, but ultimately, their actions differ in how they drive the plot and affect the story. Boy abuses his own power so to get what he wants, both in terms of business and his personal life and is also seen in The Crucible when Abigail, along with some of the other girls from her village, prepare a potion in the middle of a forest as they plan to seduce and lure the men they covet after. The two characters are portrayed in their stories such that they are motivated by their own desires, even lacking in guilt and compassion, but Boy and Abigail are seen to have varying incentives, resulting in different outcomes.

Among all the characters in The Crucible, it is not debatable how Abigail Williams is seen as the antagonist as she sets the problem in the play at the start when it was told that she was seen casting a spell in the middle of the forest. Abigail's motivation for casting a spell, hoping for Elizabeth Proctor to die so to have John Proctor for herself, is an example of how one's pleasures

are driven by id. Abigail acts based on her instincts and without thinking anything through, or rather, her willingness to acquire something she wishes surpasses that of her morals and conscience. Abigail resorts to a practice that contradicts everything her town's values represent. She does not think of the consequences that would befall upon her if she were to be caught practicing a ritual in a town that values religion determinedly. The fact that Abigail practices witchcraft in a town that follows only the readings of God in an attempt to seduce John Proctor is an evidence of acting based on one's id. Abigail's first motivation in the play is to tempt John Proctor and lure him into a relationship with her by casting a spell on his wife, Elizabeth Proctor, that would result in her death. Abigail's decision for her actions are immediately and directly responded by her instincts.

In the midst of all the chaos regarding the witchcraft incident in the town of Salem, Abigail is seen to be hiding from her lies. She is afraid of what would happen if she were to get caught. In order to save herself from what would appear as her downfall, she starts accusing innocent citizens of practicing witchcraft. Instead of confessing and telling the truth, Abigail digs a deeper hole for herself and her lies, further pushing the possibilities of making the whole witchcraft issue a bigger one. Abigail's motivation for accusing the innocent people from her town is due to the fact that she does not want to get caught; she reacts on impulse forgetting the consequences that would unfold due to her actions. Abigail chooses to side with her id, even if means sacrificing the innocence of other people and this is so she could get away without experiencing the punishment she rightfully deserve.

At the start of the play, Abigail's main purpose in the story is to seduce John Proctor and relive the life she had before she was kicked out of the Proctors' home- she wants a relationship with John. Abigail reacts on her id and chooses to cast a spell on Elizabeth Proctor. As the play progresses, Abigail's incentive shifts from her doing anything she feels she needs to do, like casting a spell on Elizabeth, so that she could get what she wants to accusing others of practicing witchcraft because she does not want to get caught. Throughout the play, Abigail's actions are based on how she does not follow her ego or superego- she rejects the morals that would have possibility in changing the outcomes of each scenes and scenarios in the play-, but rather, she chooses to take a risky path, and in which she believes that she would get what she wants.

One often feels confused about when to continue being ambitious and wish for more and knowing what should be enough. Boy Staunton comes from the richest family in his town, Deptford. Growing up, Boy wishes to increase his family's riches and states that he wants to be wealthier than his dad. In the road to being wealthy, Boy completely abandons any morals and ethics that makes a human human. Boy's motivation throughout his life is to be a successful person and rise up the social ladder. However, his dream doesn't end there. He desires for more, and he does not feel content with what he has. As a result, Boy ends up hurting her wife and the people around him and he does not see the mistakes he has done.

Leola Staunton is a victim of both Boy and the society's social standards. Boy Staunton, a character in what seems to be a product of the society's corrupt

expectations, is encouraged, throughout the whole story, to be a person with an accomplished image. In his effort to fit the image of a successful person, Boy conforms to that of the society's expectations, and forces his wife, Leola, to do the same. Boy's willingness to be seen as a successful person takes a toll on his personality as he starts to rely on his id most of the time. Boy firstly pushes Leola to fit what he thinks is an ideal woman based on his interpretation of the social standards: "[Leola] had toiled at the lessons in bridge, mah-jongg, golf, and tennis; she had plodded through the Books-of-the-Month, breaking down badly in Kristin Lavransdatter; she had listened with mystification to gramophone records of Le Sacre du Printemps and with the wrong kind of enjoyment to Ravel's Bolero but nothing made any impression on her," (Davies 140) Dunstan narrates. Unwilling to give up on Leola's image, Boy takes it upon himself to change Leola's personality and interests. Boy makes his decision based on his id and does not think for a second as to what the outcome of his actions would be and how it affects the person close to him; his priority lies on getting others to perceive him as a person of importance.

A truth in which some people may relate to is the fact that admitting one's own mistakes is difficult; it can be due to the fact that we do not want to admit that we did something wrong and feel guilty. However, admitting to mistakes is what makes a person grow, one knows more about himself and gains the opportunity to learn from them. However, this concept does not apply to Boy Staunton, as throughout his life, he has not once admitted to any of his mistakes. During his last interaction with Dunny and Eisengrim,

Dunny encourages Boy to admitting that he did hit Mrs. Dempster with the snowball and that it was he who caused a premature birth during the time. Boy denies the fact, which in analysis, he chooses to react based on his id. Boy does not want to feel guilty as he sees himself to be innocent throughout his life. He reacts quickly on instinct, denying all accusations.

Although Abigail's and Boy's actions are similar in a way that they are both driven by their ids, their actions differ in how their ids play a role in their purpose and motivation in their respective stories. Abigail reacts on her id, casting spells to cause a misfortune upon some else's life and then accusing others of practicing witchcraft as she does not want to face her punishments. On the other hand. Boy Staunton bases his decision on what he wants, ignoring other people's feelings. In addition, Boy does not admit to any of his mistakes because he does not think it seems fit for someone of his social class to have done any wrongdoings throughout his life. Boy relies on his id and in willing to do so, he achieves one of his goals but he suffers from the vice that comes along with success and the feeling of discontentment. Boy's situation is a contrast in regards to Abigail's story. Boy achieves his dream of being rich, however he does not feel content with what he has. Furthermore, he wants Leola to fit the image of her ideal woman, and in return, she loses all feelings of satisfaction and becomes numb, resulting in her death. Abigail's motivation of bewitching Elizabeth fails as evident in the story, which unfolds a series of events, including the questioning of who practices witchcraft in Salem. Abigail denies all accusations that fall upon her because she does not want to get caught. In the end, she suffers a loss as John

Proctor, her main goal, is subject to public execution. This symbolizes the end of Abigail's main dream and motivations. Boy and Abigail, both seemingly the antagonists in their own stories, react based on their ids and in return, they and the people around them suffer from their own actions.

Scared of the feeling that others will see our individual weaknesses, it is inevitable for us sometimes to avoid the violence and threats in our actions. However, we should know when to stop and acknowledge what should be acknowledged. Boy Staunton and Abigail Williams exhibit a trait that can be interpreted as a result of reacting based on one's id. Boy and Abigail both use force and threatening actions to get what they want. Although in doing so, the two characters still drive the plot in a different direction that sets the two literature works apart from each other. Additionally, it raises questions whether the plot moves on differently if the characters were to not depend on their impulses.

Leola Staunton, Boy Staunton's wife, is a victim of Boy's selfishness and self-centredness. Boy wants Leola to fit a certain image and in doing so, he harms her physically, mentally, and emotionally. Boy's actions take a toll on Leola's health, resulting in what seems to be her end. All of Boy's actions ultimately affect his family, including his children. The neglect that his children face grows to be a danger in their relationship as his son, David Staunton, feels a deep resentment towards him as he grows up. His relationship with his first family affects that of his relationship with Denyse Hornick and her child, Lorene. Lorene is the butt of the jokes during Boy's and Denyse's wedding; David and Caroline make fun of Lorene and in the

end, she feels the exhaustion, which takes a toll on her health. If not for Boy's cruelty, a different outcome would be a possibility for Leola. A possibility in which she thrives and learn to do things for herself. Boy's irresponsible actions is a matter that is concerning even beyond through how he chooses to act based on his impulses. Boy does not feel guilty whatsoever.

Boy's lack of guilt towards people is carried within him when Dunny confronts him regarding the snowball incident. Boy is stubborn in trying to deny all of what he thinks he did and did not do. A possibility of Boy coming into terms with reality and accepting the fact that he is not a god would result in the story to have a much different story plot. Boy could grow to be a person of dignity and of decency. However, Boy, throughout his whole life, chooses to act on his id and be greedy.

During the start of *The Crucible*, the girls who accompanied Abigail into the forest panic as the question of witchcraft is raised upon the citizens in the room, so as a result, Abigail threatens them, " And mark this. Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things, and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you. And you know I can do it; I saw Indians smash my dear parents' heads on the pillow next to mine, and I have seen some reddish work done at night, and I can make you wish you had never seen the sun go down!" (Miller 20) Abigail is seen to be using force and threats to silence the girls so that she doesn't get caught. Another product that comes from Abigail reacting on her id is that she is able to gain power



over people. In the following events, the girls follow everything Abigail does because they are afraid of her. The girls are afraid of saying anything because of the threat and power that Abigail holds. One can ask whether the same situations would happen if Abigail does not use her id but rather chooses to act based on her ego or superego and just confess.

As the play goes on and the witch hunt develops in a harsher situation, Abigail continues to accuse citizens of practicing witchcraft. Abigail accuses those who she sees as a threat and the court seems to follow along, as they can not fully investigate a case that would be able to present a proof. Abigail lacks compassion as she accuses people out of revenge and cowardice. She accuses a variety of characters, from minor roles to even the protagonist of the story: Tituba, Giles and Martha Corey, Goody Osborne, and John Proctor and many more. Abigail's actions that are driven by that of her id advances the plot in a shocking way and in which it reveals the values of the society of that time period. Abigail manages to take out those who comes in her way, and in which John Proctor is not an exception. Looking back on how this could have all been resolved, one asks whether everything would go smoothly if she were to confess first. Most likely, the accused whose names are stated above would still be alive. Abigail, not willing to confess is an example of how one chooses to act on impulse, as a result, driving the plot in a direction where no one knows what the outcome would be.

Boy Staunton and Abigail Williams, due to their instinctive actions, drives the plot of their stories differently. Boy Staunton abuses his wife and neglects his children and as a result, Leola dies and his children grow a feeling of

resentment towards him. Furthermore, Boy still lacks the feeling of guilt, when confronted about his mistakes. On the other hand, Abigail threatens the girls she was with so to silence them up and protect herself from any accusations of witchcraft. She, then, continues to accuse people who she feels threatened by. She does not feel anything, even as she sends people to be subject to public execution as it does not concern her, but only benefits her. In this case, Abigail's id is more concern for herself rather than confessing the truth.

Ultimately, Boy Staunton and Abigail Williams act on their id, however, their characters on their story differ in what their motivations are and how they affect and advance the plot. That being said, the two characters additionally does not share the same outcome. Boy and Abigail both achieve one of their goals; Boy achieving the success that he desires and Abigail to not get caught as a person who practiced witchcraft.

As the conclusion of *The Crucible* comes to a close, John Proctor is eventually accused of practicing witchcraft. He gets a choice of whether he pleads guilty and gets his name publicized for everyone to know that he is a witch or he denies the accusation and gets executed publicly. In the end, Proctor keeps his individuality and chooses to get executed instead. Abigail cannot do anything by this point so she loses sight of what seems to be her dream in the first place. The problem of the play revolves around the society of Salem and their values. The problem starts when Abigail wants to cast a spell on Elizabeth Proctor so to have John Proctor for herself. Along the way, Abigail acts on her impulses, thinking not much through about the

consequences so she, too, suffers in the end as she is not able to achieve her main goal. Abigail lacks guilt even as she sees Proctor on his way to his own execution.

Conclusively, Boy Staunton, during his last interaction with Dunny and Eisengrim, feels cornered as he is suddenly bombarded with information that he admits he has forgotten. Boy Staunton still does not feel guilty about the snowball incident as he tells Dunstan that he forgets anything that would be irrelevant to his success and his rising as a person of high social class. The day after their interaction, Dunstan narrates that Boy dies in his car which was found underwater. As the readers hear about this news, the information as to how and why he dies is left unknown. The police finds a stone in Boy's mouth and the evidence all points to Eisengrim. From being a spoiled child to a self-centred grown man, Boy does not shift away from the fact that he still does not feel any compassion for the people he has hurt. Numerous questions rise from Boy's death that would relate to how his actions are almost always based on his id. One can ask if he ever realizes how he abuses people and takes advantage of them; or if he ever feels regret for all the things he has done; and finally, if he ever did want to change his way of living.

Boys Staunton and Abigail Williams, although their actions are both driven by ids, the outcomes of their stories remain different. Abigail does not achieve her goal of being in a relationship with John Proctor and Boy Staunton meets his end, even having left many unanswered questions. As a result of their

actions, Boy and Abigail are left with affecting the lives of different individuals, mostly in a negative way.

Robertson Davies applies the different archetypes and the Collective Unconscious on his novel, much that it is visible for the readers to analyze the characters in which they exhibit the traits belonging to the respective archetype. The id is the impulsive and unconscious part of our psyche which responds directly and immediately to our instincts. Boy Staunton and Abigail Williams are example of characters that display these traits. Throughout The Crucible and Fifth Business, we explore how the id plays a part on the characters such as Boy and Abigail. Even though Boy and Abigail symbolizes the id in their stories, they ultimately play a distinct role, visible in their differing motives and purposes, how the story advances in which their actions take a role in, and how much different their outcomes are. Had both Boy Staunton and Abigail Williams not react on the instinctive component of their personalities, would they have been able to grow as persons with dignity and morals? Would they be able to fulfill their goals in which no other people are harmed because of their actions?