

The crucible and mrs putnam

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In the opening of the play how does Miller seek to create an atmosphere of hysteria and tension? Do you find the opening effective? The Crucible is a play by Arthur Miller written in the 1950's. It was set in the 1690's in Massachusetts. The play is about the witch trials and how something like a group of girls in the woods could lead to about 200 people being hanged and accused of witchcraft. The people of Salem were new to Massachusetts as they were puritans who went off to America to set up a new religious colony .

The people were new to their surroundings had the Native Americans as enemies because they took their land. Although the Crucible is about the witch trials, it is thought to be a metaphor for the McCarthy Communist trials that was happening during the 1950's. It was very similar to witchcraft and many people in the Hollywood were accused. You could be dismissed from the accusations of being communists after naming other people who you think were communists. Many innocent died because of both of these events. It was a way to get rid of your hatred and anger against others.

The very opening of the play portrays a worrying and fearful scene, when we see Betty in bed not moving and Reverend Parris knelt down and praying. A child unconscious in bed creates tension because we don't what is wrong and grabs the attention of the audience as the audience would be keen to know what is wrong with the child. More hysteria is caused when Tituba comes in through the door, which makes Parris angry and shouts at her " Out of here! " This sharp and imperative sentence allows Miller to show that even the minister of Salem sees a black " negro slave" as an animal.

This would gain sympathy from the audience who is tensed from all the mysteriousness that is taking place. It would also make the audience jump

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and be frightened and this gives Parris an authoritative figure. It also shows that Parris is tensed because he is even shouting at people who says that his child is going to better. Also the entrance of Abigail causes further tension between her and Parris because he asks about them dancing g in the wood and Abigail gets very defensive. This then leads on to the conversation of whether Abigail name in the village is pure or not.

When Parris question about why no one has asked her to work for the last seven months after working with the Proctors. Abigail gets very rude and blames Goody Proctor for no one offering a job “ Goody Proctor is a gossiping liar” From this we learn that Abigail is a selfish and arrogant because she knows that she is hated but yet refuses to confess her faults because she doesn't want her reputation to be besmirched because then she would be thrown out of her house and the church and out of the whole community which would do her any good so she is blaming others to keep her reputation.

This causes hysteria and tension because Abigail is getting angry and the whole conversation is getting more serious away from the main problem of Betty being sick. Parris is more worried about what his daughter and niece were doing rather than about Betty because like Abigail he doesn't want his reputation besmirched because no one would value him as a priest and he would lose his job, house and income. Abigail is also very manipulative because she makes Parris feel guilty. “ Do you begrudge my bed, uncle? This makes Parris feel guilty for accusing her and this conveys that she can play well with her words to make herself seem naive. As more people come under one roof, in one room the hysteria and tension increases because everyone

has different opinions and people are shouting over each other to make their point. This causes tension and hysteria because there is a lot of talking and shouting and people are not able to make their point because someone interrupts while another person is speaking and everything gets so confusing and out of order.

In addition to that, people like Mr Putnam and Mrs Putnam jumps into the conclusion of witchcraft before they even know what is actually happening. " How high did she fly? " This shows the narrow minded nature of the people in Salem because they don't even think about the natural causes; they just assume it has to do with witches. That was a quote from Mrs Putnam. I think the fact that she has lost 7 babies makes her think it is work of the devil trying to punish the " good".

Once everyone believed it was the work of the devil, they blamed Tituba who is only low class person in the household and her being a black slave makes it easy for everyone to blame her because as she doesn't have any power or authority she won't react and her coming from a completely different culture to than the people in Salem makes the believe that she is affected by the witch and devil.

Miller sets the whole of Act 1 in one room this conveys hysteria because they are all in one room and everyone is shouting each other. Also it will be quiet dark and crowded as the windows are all narrow so only little light comes through. I also think it is a metaphor for the narrow minded nature of the people in Salem. The fact that only a little comes through conveys that they have little knowledge of the outside world.

The language used is very different and address woman as Goody and men as Mister. This contributes to the difference in society and the time. In conclusion, I think is very effective because it grabbed my attention because of the tension and hysteria used as it made me eager to know what was happening. Miller uses language and setting effectively convey the tension and hysteria because it makes the audience be worried and tensed of the mystery of the child lying unconsciously in bed.