Death Of The Innocent Essay, Research Paper

Death of the Innocent In Arthur Miller s The Crucible, the shear madness of the Salem witch trials is explored in great detail. Historically, there are many theories on how the accusations were started such as moldy flower, resulting in the accidental taking of narcotics, or a simple break down in society. But the most probable and most widely accepted theory is the suppressed childhood of Puritan society. The Puritan people were extremely superstitious, paranoid and blinded by their own ignorance. They seemed to rule over their children with a suspecting and overprotective attitude, which led many Puritan parents to distrust their children. The children were given little to no freedom to act like normal children. They were expected to walk straight, arms by their sides, eyes slightly downcast, and they were to be silent unless they were given permission to speak. It should be by no means surprising that these girls would find this kind of lifestyle very restricting. In The Crucible, the girls try to rebel against it by playing pranks, talking to slaves and listening to their magic stories, and even dancing in the woods and pretending that they were under spells. The witchcraft hysteria starts when Mr. Paris sees the children during one of their dancing sessions. Then as one of the girls falls sick, rumors start to fly of witchcraft in Salem. The girls become frightened, and start casting the blame onto other innocent people saying I saw so and so with the devil, or they sent their spirit out and it stabbed me, or some other nonsense. Other people started to join in on accusing people of witchcraft and so silent grudges became a very dangerous thing.

Because it is human nature to profit from other s misfortune, once the accusations started, every one had someone to accuse in order to cash in on their hidden motives. As seen when Mr. Putnam accuses Mr. Cory of witchcraft in order to get a piece of land that they had been feuding over for years. The accusations continued to grow until the jail began to over flow with accused witches. The accused people of Salem were faced with a dilemma; should they sign a false document and confess to witchcraft or should they stick to their morals and take the rope. In all truth everyone in Salem should have known that there was no such thing as a witch. However, blinded by greed and superstition many innocent people in this small and normally peaceful village were murdered. Also, because of the superstitious nature of the Salem population of Salem, the idea of mass hysteria comes into effect. In order to save their own lives, many of the accused people admit to the ludicrous charge and sign the confession. However the vast majority of the accused become martyrs and is hanged. So many people would not confess that the hangings were eventually stopped.