Drummond Essay, Research Paper

Drummond

In the play written by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, Inherit the Wind, Bertram Cates is put on trial for teaching Darwin s Theory of evolution to his class, which is against the law in Hillsboro, Tennessee, because it contradicts the bibles theory of creation. Henry Drummond, a well known attorney from Chicago, becomes Cates defense attorney and uses the case as an opportunity to fight for the right to think and develop one s own truths and causes a revolution throughout the town.

Throughout the trial, Drummond is forced to use any tactic possible to gain any sort of advantage over Colonel Brady, the prosecuting attorney. Drummond reverts to sarcasm when he says, after Brady announced that he wasn t going to make a speech and then proceeded to make one anyway, Well, I sure am glad Colonel Brady didn t make a speech! (p. 70). Drummond knows that he has to use any tactic he can to lower Brady in the eyes of his supporters and he was not going to waste this opportunity to do so. Drummond pokes even more fun at Brady when he says, When I need your valuable help, Colonel, you may rest assured I shall humbly ask for it (p. 73). This is somewhat of an indirect insult about the fact that Brady is full of himself. When referring to a story written in the bible, Drummond remarks, That s a pretty neat trick, you suppose Houdini could do it? (p. 88). This is an attempt by Drummond to show how naive Brady is. At the beginning of the trial, the whole town is behind Brady and Drummond knows that in order for him to have a chance at winning this case, he is going to have to change that.

Later on during the trial, Drummond tries to established the fact that learning about evolution is not in any way harmful. He asks Howard, a boy who was in Cates class, Did it do you any harm? You still feel reasonably fit? What Mr. Cates told you, did it hurt your baseball game any? (p. 72). Drummond is trying to show the court that just because a person is taught something doesn t mean that it will affect his well being. While Brady is on the stand, Drummond asks him, Moses never made a phone call. Suppose that makes the telephone an instrument of the devil? (p. 74). Drummond is trying to prove that just because evolution was not mentioned in the bible, doesn t mean that it is wrong. Towards the latter part of Brady s testimony, Drummond asks, …and all these holy people got themselves begat through original sin? (p. 92). Drummond is showing Brady s hypocritical views about sex, therefore attacking his credibility. Drummond feels that he has to get it through to the people in the courtroom that evolution is just a theory that someone developed in their own mind, and that thinking and teaching it shouldn t be illegal.

Drummond begins to win over some of Brady s supporters as he tries to show that the fact that Cates is even on trial for what he has done is absurd. A significant moment in the play is when Drummond exclaims, With all respect to the bench, I hold that the right to think is very much on trial! It is fearfully in danger in the proceedings of this court (p.72). Drummond is trying to make everyone realize that what they are trying to do is, essentially, punish a man for thinking freely and expressing his views. Drummond shocks everyone in the courtroom when he says, …Right has no meaning to me whatsoever! Truth has meaning, as a direction (p. 74). Drummond is expressing his disapproval of the fact that society, symbolized by the court, has to label everything as either right or wrong instead of in terms of truth. Drummond displays his mental fatigue when he says, Sometimes I think the law is a horserace (p. 93). Drummond feels like all the work that he has done has been for nothing and that for every problem that the law supposedly solves, it creates a new one.

Drummond is way in over is head at the beginning of the trial but he stays determined and by the end, he feels that he has finally reached these people and has gotten them to realize that people should be able to think freely and in terms of truth, not necessarily right and wrong. Having accomplished this, Drummond feels that it is a victory in the fight for a person s right to think and express whatever he or she chooses.