Inherit The Wind Drummond’s Defense (Vs) Brady’s Essay, Research Paper

In the play Inherit the Wind by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, the two main characters, Drummond and Brady have different opinions on how humans arrived on earth. Drummond supports the evolution theory, while Brady, the creation theory. The book, which is the Broadway play’s script, is based on the 1925 Tennessee vs. John Thomas Scopes trial. The trial itself had a series of conflicts, the main one being evolution vs. religion, yet there was a series of tensions throughout the trial, including questions of collective vs. individual rights and academic vs. parental concerns. The same plot is told in the play, furthermore, the conflicting ideas of creation and evolution lead to different aspects of the debate, and the right to freedom of speech.

In the town of Hillsboro, the debate between creation and evolution is blown out of proportion. First, the townspeople react almost violently to Cates’ teaching of the evolution theory. For example, when Cates is arrested, he is called names and is threatened to be killed by the townspeople. Also, Reverend Brown’s prayer meeting influences people to wish horrible things to Cates as Brown portrays him as the devil and asks that his soul “writhe in anguish and damnation” (66). While all the townspeople, including her father have negative attitudes toward Cates, Racheal is the only one who stands up for Bert. Being his girlfriend, she knows he is telling the truth. Like a message from God, Brady came to defend the town’s belief of creation. Brady is like a God to the town, being a self proclaimed expert on the bible. Also, his political background has a lasting impact on the townspeople, giving that they all voted for him in three presidential elections. Additionally, Rachael tries to explain Bert’s ideas to Brady, but he twists them around and uses them for his own needs in the trial.

Henry Drummond has taken the case not only to defend Bert Cates but to defend the right of an individual to think for him or herself. First, the court rejects Drummond’s original defense, but he then comes up with an idea that might convince the jury. First, Drummond tries using professional scientists as defending witnesses but the judge rules them irrelevant to the case. Then Drummond argues that “a man is on trial, a thinking man” (p 72) referring to Cates’ who took it into his own hands to speak or teach what he speaks. After being denied at all costs Drummond decides to use the only thing he has left to defend Cates, the bible. Drummond defeats Brady by using examples from the Bible that oppose to relative thinking. For instance, he questions the passages about Jonah being swallowed by a whale, and then argues that whales do not eat humans. Drummond argues another passage that a human made the sun stand still. Brady agreed that the sun did stop when that’s impossible because if that really happened then “the earth stopped spinning on its axis; continents toppled over each other, mountains flew out into space. And the earth, arrested in its orbit, shriveled to a cinder and crashed into the sun” (89) which Drummond says the bible left out. Last, Drummond and Brady agreed that the sun was made on the fourth day but Drummond then stated that the length of those three days can’t be determined because there was no sun and therefore, no set length of revolution and rotation of the earth. He argued that the length of those days “could have been thirty hours! Or a month! Or a year! Or a hundred years! Or ten million years” (98). He clarified Darwins theory that it took ten million years for man to evolve, and then in the same way proved that one of the days written in the bible could have been ten million years long.

In conclusion, Brady and Drummond did not resolve the ideas in conflict but I think the point Drummond stated about the length of a day put the whole evolution and creation debate into perspective, the best for me.