The Crucible Essay Essay, Research Paper

During the Salem witch trials of 1692, many innocent people die as a cause of being accused of witchcraft. In this time period where people believe the most obscure and inconsequential stories, it is common sense for them to believe in witchery. One author named Arthur Miller, docuemented these trials in a play called The Crucible. His objective is not just to document on these events but also to compare them to those of his era, which were the communist trials of the 1950?s. In his play, he distinctly describes, one character, named Reverend Hale. Rev. Hale is sent to Salem to remedy the crisis of the so-called ?witchcraft? in the town. He is made one of the judges in the many trials and persecutes over sixty people and sends many more to jail. Throughout the story he completes a cycle called the maturation process. He goes from being a judge with an iron fist, to a compassionate person, who sees that the people of Salem are good. Rev. Hale comes to Salem as a form of authority in witchcraft; He changes significantly in the beginning, the middle, and the end.

Hale is viewed as a god exorcising the witches of the Devil; He is a pertinent part in the cases of witchcraft. Hale is called to Salem by Rev. Parris to inspect Salem for the work of Lucifer in the town. The niece of Rev. Parris is the one making up stories accusing innocent people of sending and conjuring up spirits. When received in Salem he is worshipped like a god, because of his knowledge. He has many books that are every explicit in the documentation of witchery. ?They must be; they are weighed with authority? (Miller 36). His books are almost a bible on how to excorcise witches, for they are the ones who will save the town of Salem from the evil spirits of the devil. Hale

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immediately would know if the there is witchery in Salem because, he claims the devil is very precise in what he does. If there is witchcraft in the town of Salem Rev. Hale will find it. ?No, no. Now let me instruct you. We cannot look to superstition in this. The Devil is precise; the marks of his presence are definite as stone, and I must tell you all that I shall not proceed unless you are prepared to believe me if I should find no bruise of hell upon her? (Miller 38). His knowledge of witchcraft lead him to believe that if there is hell in Salem that it would be seen.

Throughout the story Hale begins to see the truth in these people; He sees who the evil people are, but is not sure what to do about it. He decides to visit some of the future accused witches of Salem. The Nurses, and the Proctors are two families mentioned throughout the trials. He goes to the houses of these people without contempt of the court, to find out who they are. He realizes that these people are devoted and prompt Christians who would never be part of the kingdom of the Devil. ? Believe me Mr. Nurse, if Rebecca Nurse be tainted, then nothing?s left to stop the whole green world from burning. Let you rest upon the justice of the court; the court will send her home, I know it?(Miller 71). Hale then goes to the house of the Proctor family, where Elizabeth and John Proctor welcome him humbly. Hale questions Proctor and his wife and asks him why he never returned to the church. He also asks why his last child was not baptized. Hale quickly sees these as signs of witchcraft but does not let his emotions take over. He finds out that Parris, is only interested in the money given to him, and the decorative perspective of the church. ?Since we built the church there were pewter candlesticks upon the altar; Francis Nurse made them, y?know, and a sweeter hand never

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touched the metal. But Parris came, and for twenty week he preach nothing? but golden candlesticks until he had them. I labor the earth from dawn of day to blink of night, and I tell you true, when I look to heaven and see my money glaring at his elbows it hurt my prayer, sir, it hurt my prayer. I think, sometimes, the man dreams cathedrals, not clapboard meetin? houses? (Miller 65). Hale sees this and stops to think that these people might be really teling the truth, and the ones lying are those depicted to be holy by the rest of the town.

At the end of this play, Hale has completed the maturation process, by making a 360 in his beliefs of the people of Salem. Hale tries to convince Danforth, the head judge of the trials, that the people accused are people of good faith. He tells him that it is just a big misunderstanding, but Danforth does not consider his outburst and instead shuts him down. When Proctor comes up to trial with Mary Warren, one of the girls who pretend to see spirits, Hale tells Danforth that even though he did not know Proctor very well, that he should at least have the right to come back with a lawyer. ?I cannot say he is an honest man; I know him little. But in all justice sir, a claim so weighty cannot be argued by a farmer? (Miller 99). He sees that Proctor is an honest worker and does not deserve to be treated like a person of anything less. Even though he does not know him very well, he puts himself on the line to try to remedy the great calamity that has happened. Hale explodes on Danforth saying he has come to the work of the Devil in Salem by laying his signature on the death warrants of so many of innocent people. ?Why it is all simple. I come to do the Devil?s work. I come to counsel Christians they should belie

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themselves. His sarcasm collapses. There is blood on my head! Can you not see the blood on my head ?(Miller 131)!! Hale finally realizes what he has to do and decides to tell Danforth that he no longer believes as the court does, and instead of finding evil in Salem they have created it by sending so many people to their death and many others to jail.

Sometimes what is appeared to be a so simple and permeable belief turns out to be the most outlandish thing ever heard of. Even though the communist trials of the 1950?s are so far from those of 1692, they are alike in many ways. Miller tries to prove that history does repeat itself, and though some might think that our civilization is so much more advanced analyzing it would prove to differ. Reverend Hale is a great example of this because his beliefs totally changed from believing that anyone could be capable of witchcraft to being almost a joke of these honest faithful people to have any type of contact with the devil.