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Essay of “The Crucible” by Arthur Miller

In a play called “The Crucible,” there are many reasons why some characters came up with the idea of sacrificing their lives to save the things they have or even love. This is all because of rumours and the community’s ethical perspectives. During the year 1692 there was something going on in Salem, Massachusetts something called the Salem witch trials. At this time, there was two girls that made up that they saw witches, which started a tempest and people began scapegoating one another. This play shows how inequitable some people can be because of rumours they heard. In the play, “The Crucible,” by Arthur Miller, the community follows specific patterns that causes some characters to sacrifice their lives to save their identity, pride, and social status.

To start with, one reason why some characters sacrificed their lives was to save their identity. In the play, Abigail states, ‘’Why, I am sure it is, sir. There be no blush about my name’’ (Miller 4). Then she says, “My name is good in the village! I will not have it said my name is soiled! Goody Proctor is a gossiping liar!”(Miller 4). Abigail is trying to say that she has a good reputation and that no one sees her as guilty or inauspicious and that she claims Elizabeth was gossiping false rumors about her. Abigail is trying to contend her own identity by throwing Goody Proctor under the bus which causes Goody Proctor to be thrown in jail. John Proctor ends up sacrificing his life to save his identity and wife all because of Abigail’s lies and pride as well. Which brings up a question, who is John Proctor? John Proctor is a guy who had an affair with

Abigail and regrets having that affair. John knows that what he did was wrong and now thinks himself as a fraud. Now he is in jail and is going to sacrifice his life to save his identity and wife. In the play he signs a document that means he saw the devil, which is just a whole lot of baloney. But then when Danforth says that he is going to hang it upon the church for the village to see it, Proctor gets mad and Danforth asks why he doesn't want the village to see the proof, he answers, " Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I lie and sign myself in lies! Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang! How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul, leave my name alone!"(Miller 43). In other words, Proctor is trying to say that he has given everything to lies and if the village sees that he has signed the document admitting that he has seen the devil, he will be left with nothing because he would give his identity away and everyone will have ethical perspective of John Proctor. Many in the Puritan community were trying to save their identity by sacrificing their lives like Proctor, there was Giles Corey who sacrificed his life not hanging but through pressing so that he can save his name and land. But many died because of other people's prides.

In particular, pride is another reason why many characters sacrificed their lives. Because of Danforth, Rebecca Nurse and John Proctor died because of Danforth's pride. In the play he states, " How hear me and beguile yourselves no more. I will not receive a single plea for pardon or postponement. Them that will not confess will hang. Twelve already executed; the names of these seven are given out, and the village expects to see them die this morning. Postponement now speaks a floundering on my part; reprieve or pardon must cast doubt upon the guilt of them that died till now. While I speak God's law, I will not crack its voice with whimpering. If retaliation is your fear, know this—I should hang ten thousand that dared to rise against the law,

and an ocean of salt tears could not melt the resolution of the statutes. Now draw yourselves up like men and help me, as you are bound by Heaven to do'' (Miller 39). In other words, Danforth won't have a postponement because then he would look bad in front of the village and also because he has too much pride. This led to hangings because Danforth focused too much on other people's perspectives and the village's patterns that everyone followed. Many people today have too much pride that can lead to destruction. This can also relate to John's pride which affected Elizabeth's relationship until the end. According to the text in page 17, it states, "I'll plead my honesty no more, Elizabeth"(Miller). John Proctor says this meaning that he is tired of what everyone thinks of him and he can't stand that his wife thinks amiss of him. John knows that what he did with Abigail was wrong but he can no longer stand that his wife still thinks bad of him when nothing else has happened between him and Abigail. This led to destruction in the community because with Proctor and Elizabeth in a disagreement, Abigail can blame Elizabeth of witchcraft and no one will care. Even though Abigail accuses Elizabeth of witchcraft, John sacrifices his life to save Elizabeth's. This happened because of both Abigail and John's pride. In conclusion, Danforth, John, and Abigail's pride is too hard to compromise with because of social status.

The last reason why some characters sacrificed their lives is because of social status. Social status is the population within a society. In the play it states, " Abigail I have fought here three long years to bend these stiff-necked people to me, and now, just now when some good respect is rising for me in the parish, you can compromise me very character.'" (Miller 4) This means that everyone now respects Reverend Parris after three years. This means that until now Reverend Parris is gaining population but now that Abigail danced in the forest his social status

is going to go down. This can lead to ethical views because then no one will see Reverend Parris as a good respected man, the village will see him as an unacceptable man. This problem made Reverend Parris accuse whoever he saw, like John Proctor. Even Rebecca Nurse has a good social status and since Thomas Putnam didn't like Francis Nurse and Rebecca Nurse he had his daughter blame Rebecca Nurse of witchcraft so that he can stay with the Nurse's land ( three hundred acre ). In the text it states, " As for Rebecca herself, the general opinion of her character was so high that to explain how anyone dared cry her out for a witch—and more, how adults could bring themselves to lay hands on her—we must look to the fields and boundaries of that time" (Miller 8). This is just stating that Rebecca Nurse is pleasant woman and everyone respects her. A little more into the play it states, " It was Edward and Jonathan Putnam who signed the first complaint against Rebecca; and Thomas Putnam's little daughter was the one who fell into a fit at the hearing and pointed to Rebecca as her attacker. To top it all, Mrs. Putnam—who is now staring at the bewitched child on the bed—soon accused Rebecca's spirit of "tempting her to iniquity," a charge that had more truth in it than Mrs. Putnam could know" (Miller 8). This means that Thomas Putnam had his daughter blame Rebecca Nurse of witchcraft since she was already ill. We can now conclude that some lies to get a good social status is never okay.

As a result of everything; rumours, jealousy, social status, and pride someone ended up dying. Something vigorous never comes out of something faulty. That someone is John Proctor. This matters today because now we know that we shouldn't follow the history's steps we should be better than that and not scapegoat. The community shouldn't be the same as the past we have to change over time.

Miller, Arthur. "The Crucible." Penguin Books, 1995.