

The crucible tragedy



We all have heroes. It may be an athlete, a movie star, or an animated cartoon hero such as the Hulk or Iron Man. But there are other types of heroes too, tragic heroes.

Tragic heroes are defined in Arthur Miller's essay, "Tragedy and The Common Man", which defines his tragedy theory. One would also define "The Crucible" as a tragic story. It is no surprise that Arthur Miller also wrote the crucible after writing his, "Tragedy and The Common Man" theory. Arthur Miller wrote "The Crucible" to conform perfectly to his, "Tragedy and The Common Man" theory. Heroes aren't always the ones flying around with capes, they don't always wear tights, and can't always lift cars like a feather, according to Arthur Miller they're the common man. In his theory of tragedy he expresses his belief that the tragic hero doesn't have to be some divine god or king figure.

In his "Tragedy and Common Man" essay he says, "I believe that the common man is as apt a subject for tragedy in its highest sense as kings were". He believes the hero should be an average, common man, because that way everyone can relate to their feelings and situations. The character John Proctor, in the crucible is our everyday hero, the kind that doesn't fly or have laser beams. In "The Crucible", Arthur Miller created John Proctor perfectly to fit this average, everyday man description. Arthur Miller created John as a farmer, an average profession, he was also thirty years old, and was married, he wasn't rich or dirt poor, just average, and even-tempered. Here Miller supported his theory that the tragic hero can be any average Joe, they don't have to be rich, or royal, that is why Proctor

was created and pretended as a common fellow. Heroes fight for justice, and tragic heroes in a way do the same.

Arthur Miller believes tragic heroes fight for what they believe is right, and stick to their beliefs, challenging what they find wrong and corrupt. He defines it as ??? The flaw, or crack in the characters, is really nothing-and need be nothing, but his inherent unwillingness to remain passive in the face of what he conceives to be a challenge to his dignity, his image of his rightful status . This shows how Arthur Miller thinks a tragic hero should always stand up for themselves in their dignity, never change yourself or opinions to please others. He puts this directly into the crucible with John Proctor. At the end they plead and beg Proctor for a confession, telling them it will save his life, yet when they ask him to sign it he refuses.

He throws a fit calming that once he signs it hes given himself over to the court and loosing any dignity and self respect he has left. Arthur Miller makes Proctor say, ??? Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I lie and sign myself to 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 me my name??? (Pg 143). This conforms perfectly to Arthur Millers idea that the hero should never give up on their dignity, but always hang strong to it.

This also supports Millers theory of standing up to injustice and corruption, with Protector standing up to the corrupt court. In Millers tragedy theory he says, ??? i think the tragic feeling is evoked in us when we are in the presence of a character who is ready to lay down his life, if need be, to

secure one thing-his sense of personal dignity???. And Proctor is a character, who does precisely this. If Proctor had agreed to lie and sign a false confession he would have lived, yet he refused to do this because it would ruin his dignity. For refusing to give up his dignity and lie, Proctor did die, and according to Millers theory this makes him a true tragic hero. Miller has Procter rebel against many things he doesn't believe in from skipping church because he believes the Priest Paris is greedy, to challenging the court risking his life. The court was stable before, and feared but Proctor challenged it and went up against it, challenging its stability.

This stability scared Danforth shown buy how he wanted to put Proctors confession out for all to see, showing challenging the court was silly, and when Proctor died he hung him for all too see, trying to send the message this is what happens when you mess with the stable system. In Arthur Millers ??? Tragedy and The Common Man??? he displays his belief that, ??? The revolutionary questioning of a stable government is what terrifies???. This relates to directly how Proctor challenged the court system terrifying its members like Danforth. Arthur Miller thought to be a tragedy, the hero must fight up against a corrupt stable system, and stick true to their believes and dignity, which Proctor did.

Everyone has a weakness, even heroes such as Superman and green krypton or Louis Lane, or the Green Lantern with his flaw being the color yellow or a wooden ring. In his theory, Arthur Miller refers to this weakness as the ??? tragic flaw???. This tragic flaw, is what leads to the characters tragic end. ??? In the sense of having been initiated by the hero himself, the tale always

reveals what has been called his "tragic flaw," a failing that is not peculiar to grand or elevated characters???

Proctor had a few flaws, some we would view as bad, some good. One could argue it was a flaw for Proctor not to lie, because if he had lied he would have saved him, and been around for his pregnant wife. A more obvious, typically viewed immoral flaw was that Proctor had an affair with Abigail.

If he had never done this, Abigail would never have been obsessed with him, never want to eliminate his wife, and the witch trials would have never begun, saving innocent people and himself. His tragic flaw, like Miller said in his essay was the end of him. ??? Usually, heroes are immortal or at least seem that way, tragic heroes aren't. It is their tragic acts and flaws that lead to their tragic end.

For defending his dignity and believes Proctor was hung. As if this wasn't bad enough, he was hung in front of the whole town, as an example of what happens when you go against the church. But, because it is a tragedy while things ended badly for him, due to his acts things got better and improved for other people. Shortly after Proctor died, the Salem witch trials ended and his wife remarried. It took Proctor's heroic act of fighting the court and his death, to make the people of Salem see the trouble with the witch trial and end it.

It took a tragic end for Proctor to create a just happier place for the majority. This tragic end for the hero and victory with benefitting others fits Miller Arthur's theory. Arthur Miller would agree with the Salem trials ending after Protector's death because it showed the people have learned. In his

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theory, he says ??? More important, from this total questioning of what has previously been unquestioned, we learn???.

This shows how Miller believes someone has to stick up to the system and be crushed to prove the point. Something dramatic has to happen to make people learn and realize it??™s wrong. It??™s that fear feeling you get of fear when you don??™t know if the heroes going to win. Tragedies create fear. And as Arthur Miller says, ??? It is the common man who knows this fear best???. And Proctor, this common man creates a fear in us. It makes us fear if we are part of this corruption or not .

Proctor makes us wonder and fear where we would be if we were in this situation. It makes us fear that we??™d be the unjust ones persecuting innocent people, or we could be the ones being accused of being witches. Miller says, The quality in such plays that does shake us, however, derives from the underlying fear of being displaced, the disaster inherent in being torn away from our chosen image of what and who we are in this world???. This means that tragedies make us fear and question our own dignity and who we are or would be in a certain situation such as the Crucible. Arthur Miller created ??? The Crucible??? as perfect support for his , ??? Tragedy and The Common Man???. In his ??? Tragedy and The Common Man???, he defined Tragedy with the hero being tragic, going up against a system, protecting self-dignity, having a tragic flaw, a tragic ending with a lesson, and fear. All of this was incorporated into the crucible with the tragic hero being John Proctor.