

Identity in the crucible



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Essay: Identity in ??? The Crucible??? It is a commonly accepted idea, that a human being never stops learning. Although this applies to knowledge of the world, it also applies to knowledge of oneself. In the span of one??™s life time, a person would constantly go through changes, therefore needing to reevaluate themselves. It is often in great crisis, that people learn a side of themselves that they have never known before. Arthur Miller??™s play, The Crucible, is an example which features self discovery. If the characters had never reevaluated themselves, the conflict never would have resolved.

Through the changes in Hale??™s change in judgement, John Proctor??™s death, and Elizabeth???'s emotional outbreak, the Crucible proves to be a play dealing with discovering one??™s identity through crisis. Despite starting off as a naive and eager, Reverend John Hale went through a moral journey in the play, and came out a different man. Initially, he was confident and blindly oppressed by his position and sense of authority. Due to this aspect of him, he puts words into the mouth of the girls while he failed to notice this and believed himself to be a sense of justice.

Because of Hale??™s enthusiasm and religious ideals, he focused mainly on his church practices and responsibility of his social position; it is not surprising that he lacked self reflection and a sense of his own person, as well as growth. Without an understanding of himself and his position, he put the innocent people in peril. It was because of this guilt that finally provided him with the need to self reflect and discover his moral conscience. By Act III, Hale can no longer dismiss his doubts and guilt, and decided to confront it.

His shaking hands upon signing the death warrant of Rebecca Nurse and his challenges in court were evidences of his new discovered identity. Quote displaying this would be from court, ??? Your honour, I cannot think you may judge the man on such evidence.???/ ??? Private vengeance is working through this testimony.??? (Miller, The Crucible) As of before, Hale would have been blind, and acted as the one who condemned the innocent, but now he had done the opposite. Through challenging the court, he questioned the basis of his own beliefs, and was forced to reevaluate himself for a new sense of identity.

Hale??™s moral journey had given him a new perspective, which changed him spiritually as well as emotionally. At the end of his moral journey, he expressed his emotions and beliefs freely and fearlessly within the court, disregarding the consequences it may have on him. ??? This girl has always struck me as false!??? / ??? Stop now before another is condemned!??? (Miller, The Crucible) Finally, Hale quitted the courtroom with a new sense of self, in collective with his morals, values, and beliefs. At the end, Hale was left crying on his knees as John Proctor was hanged. He is an example of a good man blinded by authority, only to discover himself through crisis when it was too late.

In contrast, John Proctor was a self aware man with strong conscience and thought of himself negatively rather than in positive light. Initially, John was described to be a respected man in Salem for his good sense, honesty and temper. He was a hard working man who provided well for his family.

However, he himself believed that he was no saint, who acted against his own moral beliefs through his adultery with Abigail Williams. Due to the

constant battle within himself, John reevaluates his identity regularly. John has a strong sense of responsibility for his wife and children, his social position, and the importance of his family name. John especially puts emphasis on the importance of one's name, and what it represented about himself and his family. "We vote by name in this society, not by acreage."

(Miller, The crucible) The conscience of his name was an important source to his strong beliefs in values as a human being. As the play progresses, John's internal battle with himself continued on. On one side he lusted over Abigail, but on the other he wanted to remain faithful to Elizabeth. He constantly examined his own identity, to see in himself that he wanted to be a good man.

Although clouded by lust, he realized that he must denounce Abigail when he heard that Elizabeth has been mentioned in court. However, even though he always wanted to be a good man, this decision came by the crisis of the circumstances, rather than his own self determination. When Elizabeth was finally accused of witchery, his only thought was to free her name and expose the madness that was Abigail from condemning the innocent people in town. This situation forced John into discovering and reevaluating his identity. In the attempt to save Elizabeth, John confessed his adultery with Abigail, and confronted his guilt and negative conscience. Through this act, he opened a new journey from guilt and saw himself differently.

It made him see what was truly important to him, that he wanted to live up to his moral code, and be a good man even if it costs his life. He realized his own sense of self was what was important. "How may I live without my

name??? (Miller, The Crucible) Although he can never forget his guilt, but John lived up to his nobility and kept the respect people had for his name.

John Proctor is an example of a man who discovered himself through crisis, and died as a tragic hero. On the other hand, Elizabeth Proctor was different from the previous two. As of a woman living in such an era, she was not one expected to have much conscience in oneself.

In beginning, Elizabeth was a described as sickly and cold. Her relationship with John was clearly cold and distant. Although aware of John??™s lechery with Abigail, she remained loyal to John.

She was aware of her identity as John??™s moral conscience and acted upon it. As a mother and wife, she was not one with strong sense of identity. She was reserved, hard working, and loyal, just like any other puritan woman. It was through John??™s affair with Abigail, that she felt pain and to see that part in her identity. As the crisis in the play thickens, Elizabeth began her journey of self discovery.

She displayed honesty and courage that would, and should not be expected to be found on a woman of her era. Although pained by John??™s affairs with Abigail and having a cold relationship with John, Elizabeth found exceptionally loyalty within herself. She lied in court, against her usual honesty, to protect John. Through the crisis, Elizabeth learned to look and reevaluate her own identity. She began to look in herself for the source of problems, rather than blaming John. ??? It needs a cold wife to prompt lechery.

??? (Miller, The Crucible) This proves that she identified herself as a fault, rather than blaming John, as she had done before. When she was jailed, she had time to look deeper into her consciences. She saw her own faults, the need for self growth, and felt a great guilt to John. She transformed from an ordinary woman who lacked identity, to now a woman filled with new found feelings and identity. When she saw John again by near end of the play, she begged for his forgiveness and became honest with herself as well as with her husband.

??? It were a cold house I kept!??? (Miller, The Crucible) She had admitted her faults, and recognized herself as the reason for John??™s lechery. For the love and respect she had for John, she guided her husband through his moral journey and watched him husband die. Elizabeth was an example of a woman who discovered herself and her true emotions through crisis. In conclusion, the sense in one??™s identity proves to be of great importance, and goes through several revaluations through a crisis. Through Arthur Miller??™s play, The Crucible portrays self discovery through the changes in the character John Hale, John Proctor, and Elizabeth Proctor, it was shown that if no one revaluated their sense of identity during a crisis, nothing would change, and nothing would be solved.