
The Crucible: Hale's Transformation

Arthur Miller managed to show changes in Hale's character during the Crucible. Throughout the play, the writer decided it would be essential to include a flawed character that would receive forgiveness at the end of the final act. Why?

During the first act, the audience is introduced to Reverend Hale as a somewhat proud and arrogant man. "Have no fear now – we shall find him out if he has come among us, and I mean to crush him utterly if he has shown his face!". Reverend Hale is introduced to the town as the one who will take care of the malicious supernatural occurrences happening in the town of Salem. He claims himself as superior and immediately becomes the character in 'charge' of figuring out what is happening. His persona is confident and believes that he's the only one who can fix what's been going on. This is also not the first supernatural occurrence that he has dealt with, causing a somewhat mild snobby attitude. He also, ironically, comments on how the town should not jump to conclusions of what is happening without hard based scientific facts. Despite this assertion, he tries to find "the Devil's marks" which is inherently the opposite of what he claimed the town should not do. With this, the audience realizes that he is a proud intellectual trying to fix this paranormal event. It is sadly quick to notice that he is making things worse as he is being manipulated by the acclaimed villain, Abigail causing the audience to dislike the man presented immediately. Arthur Miller decided to give a balance to the cast of characters by adding someone with good intentions. This might be for multiple reasons, proving that there were people genuinely fooled with the mass hysteria in town (in the actual historical event), or even resembling how McCarthyism was dealt with. McCarthyism was a puzzling time for those involved. Most even lost their jobs. They might have actually been genuinely fooled when this happened.

During the second act, however, the man that the audience has grown to act hostile to, because of his tedious and delusional behaviour, is slowly becoming a slightly toned character. "Proctor, I cannot think God be provoked so grandly by such a petty cause...think on your village and what may have drawn from heaven such thundering wrath upon you all". A simple yet intriguing line is coming from Hale. Hale is more subtle throughout the second act; he stays mostly silent; when he doesn't, he is the only one informing about or defending the court. When told by Proctor how much of a blasphemy this whole ordeal has caused. Hale proceeds to dismiss it as an act of the Lord, defending once again the higher-ups. This proves how severe Hale is when it comes to his religion and his righteousness. However, as the act continues to progress, the audience realizes that Hale becomes more independent of his thoughts and opinions. For example, when Elizabeth had to be taken as she was a suspect, Hale immediately thinks this action as excessive but firmly believes that the court system shall be just and fair. This approach shows that Hale does not switch sides easily and would rather judge for himself rather than being convinced by other opinions. Arthur Miller creates a confident tone through Hale's phrasing. By using the connotations "thundering wrath," it gives the impression on how dangerous Hale is throughout the act. He is taking this whole scenario intensely and thinks that there shall be substantial consequences if he does not.

The third act is when the audience sees Hale in a new light. "We cannot blink it more. There is a prodigious fear of this court in the country." In the third act, Hale realizes that anyone will lie to

the court if it means not suffering; there was never a supernatural occurrence; it was just some petty prank. Hale finally grasps that he was never in control of the situation at hand. The man understands that he and others around him have been manipulated for a much more serious and sinister plot. Once he becomes aware, the Reverend realizes that no one in the court is listening to him. His ego starts showing when his morals and standards start to kick in. He thought that with a little reason, the court would be convinced that this chaos was just created for the sake of a teen's amusement. Nevertheless, no one in the court believes this, except the ones who were already aware. He is mostly embarrassed and even infuriated at himself for even believing any of this. At the end of the act, he comes out like a broken man, a pitiful sight for the audience to see. The audience then proceeds to forgive him, but that will not change what has been done.

The fourth act is when everything goes disastrous for Hale. "Life, woman, life is God's most precious gift; no principle, however glorious, may justify the taking of it. I beg you, woman, prevail upon your husband to confess. Let him give his lie. Quail not before God's judgment in this, for it, may well be God damns a liar less than he that throws his life away for pride. Will you plead with him? I cannot think he will listen to another." In act 4, the Reverend is not the man the audience once knew. It is now revealed tragically, Hale's mental instability. The sane persona the man kept upfront is no longer a part of him. Now, his shadow is the only thing in sight, something that was growing with power throughout the story. The man who once thought he knew what was right from wrong is now begging people to lie for them to avoid death. He is now attempting to save Proctor as that is whom he feels most responsible. He thinks that he is the one to blame for this tragedy. He thinks this is using the reasoning of how he should not have been 'fooled.' Hale is now attempting to fix what has happened to the town of Salem. The phrase "God damns a liar less than he that throws his life away for pride" gives away how Hale feels throughout the act. He is showing how he does not fear the disapproval of God if it is to save the lives of people.

In conclusion, Hale went through a drastic development, a truly human character who has been broken — trying his best now to solve all that's been shattered, a hopeless man. His persona was the only thing he wanted to show, the only thing that he thought could keep up, the only thing he thought could solve the issue. Sadly, his persona is now no more.