

Full Length Research Paper

The quest for identity in Arthur Miller's "The crucible"

Noorbakhsh Hooti

English Department, Faculty of Arts, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran. E-mail: nhooti@yahoo.com.
Tel: +989125935460.

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The purpose of the present analysis of "The Crucible" is to study the action of the play in terms of the implication of quest for identity of the characters involved by scrutinizing the various dilemmas into which the characters find themselves. The self of an individual becomes foregrounded in the moment of crisis, which involves emotional, moral and social predicaments. Such situations lead the individual to enter into a process of covert introspection, which leads to certain decisions resulting in an overt action. Thus, the study of the actions of characters in a play can effectively lead to an understanding of the nature of their 'self'. By studying the play from the perspective mentioned earlier, the researcher hopes to uncover a hidden search for identity in the play.

Key words: Crucible, self, identity, quest, self-understanding.

INTRODUCTION

The study begins with a brief introduction of the play and gradually displays the problems of identity. Arthur Miller's "The Crucible" was first presented in Broadway on January 22, 1953. The play, set in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692, is based on a reconstruction of history, and dramatizes the famous or rather infamous witch-hunt that was carried out in a New England village. What makes the opening of the play highly dramatic is the fact that, it coincided with the tremendous hue and cry created by the accusations of Senator Joe McCarthy. When in 1950 McCarthy addressed the Ohio Candy Women's Republican Club in Wheeling, West Virginia; in his speech, he claimed to have a list of two hundred and five known communists in the State Department. McCarthy's disclosure created a great furor and sent waves of panic among Americans. The threat of communism from within had serious implications for the national politics of America. This threat also became a common concern of conservatives throughout the country and united them against the perceived danger from communism. The event led to a nation-wide investigation of people holding public offices.

By 1953, the entire social climate had been loaded with the pressure of public opinion and a sense of insecurity characterized people in public positions, who felt pressurized about their public image. The appearance of Miller's play "The Crucible" could not have found a more relevant context than this scandal. It found a contemporary parallel to the history it dramatized. It

linked the social hysteria of the late seventeenth century to the present scenario of politicization of social life. In the Introduction to his Collected Plays, Miller (1957: 39) writes:

"It was not only the rise of McCarthyism that moved me, but something which seemed much more weird and mysterious ... it was as though the whole country had been born anew... that the terror in these people was being knowingly planned and consciously engineered... That so interior and subjective an emotion could have been so manifestly created from without was a marvel to me".

In the introduction to his Collected Plays, Miller (1976: 29) referred to the circumstances in which he wrote "The Crucible":

In "The Crucible", however, there was an attempt to move beyond the discovery and unveiling of the hero's guilt, a guilt that kills the personality. I had grown increasingly conscious of this theme in my past work, and aware too that it was no longer enough for me to build a play, as it were, upon the revelation of guilt, and to rely solely upon a fate which exacts payment from the culpable man. Now guilt appeared to me, no longer the bedrock beneath which the probe would not penetrate. I saw it now as a betrayer, as possible by the most real of our illusions, but nevertheless a quality of mind capable of being overthrown.

Miller's reflection on McCarthyism led him to write —The Crucible, through which he wanted to expose the inhuman conduct of the committee, which was to investigate the charges of communism against eminent and responsible persons. In order to deal with the horror of the events that followed McCarthy's announcement, Miller was in search of an allegory, which could dramatize this public menace. The Salem witchcraft trials provided him with the raw material for his aesthetic and dramatic reaction to the modern terror let loose in the American society. Miller created the characters in "The Crucible" on the basis of the historical records related to the witchcraft trials. After reading about the behaviour of certain people living at that time, Miller was able to create characters who could at once capture the mass hysteria of Salem in 1692 and the contemporary American scenario. Thus, "The Crucible" was born out of a blending of history, aesthetics and politics. The play re-enacts the witchcraft trials of 1692, which were the result of a mischief played by some young and sexually repressed girls, who accused most of the respectable members of society of witchcraft. The action of the play reaches its climax when the protagonist, John Proctor, is caught in a complex dilemma. He has to confess his adultery and denounce his mistress in order to save his wife, who has been accused of witchcraft by her lover. Proctor's crisis of conscience emerges out of the difficult choice he has been offered, either he has to die or denounce his friends as witches. Proctor chooses to die rather than destroy the reputation of people who were innocent. Miller drew his characters from the seventeenth century, who presented a contrast to the living people in terms of their morality. Miller's contemporary society was highly pragmatic, suppressing an open debate on moral principles, whereas the seventeenth century Salem society was, in Miller's words in Bigsby (1984: 200):

Morally vocal people then avowed principles, sought to live by them and die by them. Issues of faith, conduct, society, pervaded their private lives in a conscious way. They needed but to disapprove to act. I was drawn to this subject because the historical moment seemed to give me the poetic right to create people of higher self-awareness than the contemporary scene affords.

Miller treats the historical account of witchcraft in a manner which depicts "the Quest for Identity" of the characters in the play who are involved in difficult moral choices. Man is conditioned by the prevalent circumstances, and above all, he is leashed by the different context-based psychological, cultural, moral, religious and socio-political values, that are what push man into a world of alienation and make him grope for his real identity. Ganguly (2001:145) rightly remarks:

"In a world in which horizons of value are as dispersed as geographical or historical ones, alienation itself takes on new meaning and makes it all the more difficult to distinguish economic from cultural estrangement, contaminated as the categories are of culture and

economy".

The protagonist, John Proctor's wife, Elizabeth, is accused of witchcraft by his lover. In order to save his wife, John Proctor is asked to confess his adultery publicly and denounce his mistress. The girls who were instrumental in initiating the witch-hunt trials, denounce their victims in the horrifying court scene. Proctor makes a futile attempt of breaking the hold of the girls over the court. He is offered the option of obtaining his freedom by denouncing his friends as witches. However, Proctor chooses to die rather than destroy the honor of guiltless people. The play leads to a gradual heightening of the crisis across the four acts. Act I seeks to locate blame for both private and public problems. Act II dramatizes the gradual invasion of Proctor's home by the court.

In Act III, the dominant action consists of establishing the reliability of the accuser and the accused. Act IV affirms the virtue of the protagonist when he chooses to go to God through death. The impact of an individual's choice on himself is most vividly and unequivocally dramatized in the character of Proctor. The crisis for Proctor manifests itself in shifting the mode of his existence from private to public. In the beginning of the play, Proctor had an attitude of detachment from the Salem trials as well as from some of the prominent persons like Reverend Parris and Thomas Putnam. Proctor's effort is to maintain his privacy and not getting entangled in affairs that do not concern him. He says, "I have a crop to sow and lumber to drag home" (Miller, 1967:360-henceforth Miller), while walking away from the gathering thunderheads. Proctor has been presented as entrapped in a complex situation involving a serious predicament for him. On the one hand, he considers his world and his responsibility to it as ending at the boundary line, on the other hand, he finds himself involved in a world beyond his conscious intention to do so, thereby violating his self-created boundary line. Proctor's tragic end is the result of his being placed between two opposite alternatives, out of which he must choose one. Proctor's heroic destiny seems to be thrust upon him, which leads him to a dangerous situation involving two contradictory choices out of which he must follow one.

It could be argued that Proctor's tragedy comes into being due to his very first choice of adultery with Abigail. All subsequent events in Proctor's life can be traced back to this original choice, which gradually leads him to his tragic fate. It is also to be noted that in "The Crucible", Miller has tried to balance the personal and the social. Proctor commits a sin, the sin of adultery, for which he must be punished; however, the punishment of one's sins is not the only concern of Miller in the play. He has provided a different emphasis on the situation. One of the aims of the playwright is to present Proctor as a victim of public authority, which has invaded into the private lives of individuals. Proctor's sin of adultery was a personal error, which was dragged into a public domain. Miller's aim is not so much religious, as it is to show the impact of

the Salem trials on the self awareness of individuals. Proctor's journey into the deep recesses of himself is necessitated by a public hysteria that followed the Salem trials.

Miller is preoccupied with carving his way to the vortex of violence and injustice pervading contemporary society. Miller vivisects the figures of his characters, and sees through the pseudo-serious mask with which he hoodwinks the members of his society. There is an innate urge to violate the principles of social justice in all the characters of the play.

ARGUMENT

The loss of identity and the quest for it has been the pervasive theme in contemporary American literature. Though, the problem of the quest for identity was very much there even in the 19th century, or even much before, the contemporary writers seem to work out new equations. Bigsby believes (2005: 158): "The Crucible is both an intense psychological drama and a play of epic proportions". The philosophers, like Kierkegaard and Gabriel Marcel, tried to resolve the dichotomy between the polarities such as intellect and intuition, reason and emotion and as a corollary, art and life. They too could not arrive at a concrete statement. The Freudian school of thought believes that 'personality' comprises of a series of tentative psychological states. Thus, it is a very complicated phenomenon. From anthropological and sociological points of view, identity is co-related with status, sex, age, family, profession, nationality and so on. The European phenomenologists like Heidegger and Gabriel Marcel maintain that, the problem of identity is to define one's connection between one's inward experience and the strange compulsive meaningless duty, merely to maintain existence in the community of material needs. In other words, man must define himself in terms of a community of selves.

At the level of individual within a social context, ethnic identity may contribute to both in-group bonds and hostility toward other groups (Jones, 1997). Tajfel (1981) believes that, at the level of groups within a society, social identity theory and self-categorization theory emphasize the potential for group-based identities to foster support for the *status quo* among higher power and status groups, and to foster intergroup competition and movements for political change among lower power and status groups. Individual and society have always been in conflict over imposing their own identity upon each other. As Crawford and Rossiter (2006: 8) pertinently comment, "young people's interest in identity is usually personal and psychological". On the other hand, the focus of community interest in identity is often sociological: the concern is to hand on the distinguishing characteristics of the community, ethnic and religious identities in particular.

In "The Crucible", Miller has placed individual vis-à-vis social, psychological and moral predicaments. Proctor's search for identity is characterized by two phases related to the witch-hunt trials. At first, he gets involved in the whole socio-judicial process of the trials quite unexpectedly and voluntarily. Before even he could realize, he found himself amidst a very serious con-troversy, in which he was obliged to make a conscious choice. Thus, the second phase of his involvement in the public controversy was what activated and necessitated his quest for identity. When in the beginning, Proctor learns from Mary Warren about the 'mischief', he does not imagine the tragic dimension the event will acquire. After that the events move very fast. He tells his wife that he has a mind to go to Salem and voice his objections against the proceedings. However, to his horror, he discovers that he is personally involved in the whole controversy, because many of the accused are his closest friends. This is the first self-realization for Proctor, after the outbreak of social hysteria. The second shocking news is that Elizabeth, his wife has been arrested. These two happenings compel Proctor to abandon his stance of keeping an objective distance from the tragic trials. He is forced to redefine his 'self' in the context of changed circumstances, which necessitate his personal involvement in the trials.

When Proctor finally takes the decision to go to Salem, it was already too late for him and he was left with very little choice. Proctor's journey to Salem is integrally related to the abstract journey into his own 'self'. In the beginning, Proctor is on the periphery of the Salem trials. However, from the periphery he moves to the centre of the controversy. This is the phase of acute crisis for him. Proctor's going to the centre of controversy parallels his reaching a state of intensified self-awareness. In his attempt to rescue his wife and argue her case before the Deputy Governor Danforth and other judges, there are two important attempts made by Proctor. First, he exploits reason and his legal knowledge, which reflects his 'self'. Second, he tries to make a futile attempt to remain neutral in the proceedings. These two opposite actions of Proctor reveal the contradictions or split of his 'self'. Proctor's attempts to rescue his wife lead to a drastic correction in his views on reason and the objectivity of the legal process. Danforth's explanation shatters Proctor's hopes of being able to save his wife and friends, which makes him feel incapacitated. This acute feeling of helplessness is the most crucial element in Proctor's self-understanding.

There are two important aspects in Proctor's 'quest for identity'. The most important process in Proctor's search for identity is his coming to terms with the inevitability of his transformation from a "private" to a "public" man. The second and accompanying search for identity dawned on Proctor is the necessity he feels for moving from guilt to responsibility, as the underlying motive for his confessions. In spite of realizing the inevitability of

transforming into a “public” man, Proctor makes the last attempt to retain a small part of his private ‘self’, symbolized by his name. This is reflected in Miller’s interview in 1953, shortly before the opening of “The Crucible”:

“Nobody wants to be a hero. You go through life giving up parts of yourself – a hope, a dream, an ambition, a belief, a liking, a piece of self-respect. But in every man there is something he cannot give up and still remain himself – a core, an identity, a thing that is summed up for him by the sound of his own name on his own ears. If he gives that up, he becomes a different man, not himself (Nelson, 1970: 169)”.

Thus, the play dramatizes how a social event can bring about significant changes in the self-perception of an individual. Proctor has been happy to maintain a secluded way of living. Before the outburst of the mass hysteria, his self-imposed isolation is reflected in his own words:

“I have trouble enough without I come five miles to hear him preach only hellfire and bloody damnation. Take it to heart, Mr. Parris. There are many others who stay away from church these days because you hardly ever mention God any more. (Miller: 359)”.

Proctor’s loosening faith in religion as a way of discovering God is clearly reflected in the extract. Danforth’s statements stir this ‘secluded and private man’ from the slumber of his ignorance.

Cusatis believes that:

Consider the role of religion in the play. Miller reverses what might be regarded as the normal moral situation: traditionally, societies have turned to religious authorities for guidance about moral questions; but in “The Crucible” the religious authorities are villainous, seeking to force people to act against their consciences to save themselves—to sacrifice their souls to save their bodies in the name of fighting the devil” (Cusatis, 2010: 155)

It is also interesting to observe that what initiates Proctor’s search for identity is not an act of self-discovery per se, but the absurdity of the legal process, which forces him to realize that he can no longer remain a detached observer of the witch hunt trials. If he has to save his wife, the only alternative left before him is to accuse Abigail of deliberately plotting his wife’s murder and while doing so, as a necessity Proctor has to expose his private life and the sense of guilt he harbors to the inquisition. However, here too Proctor feels deceived, since the clever girl exploits the atmosphere of public hysteria to trap him. This situation brings the private life of Proctor in a public domain. In a sense, Proctor suffers from a double guilt. At first, he feels guilty for his adultery.

Second, he experiences guilt for remaining detached, which has led him to the situation of the present impasse. The awareness of guilt, thus, is one of the vital stages in Proctor’s search for identity. This is unequivocally reflected when he cries out to Danforth:

“A fire, a fire is burning! I hear the boot of Lucifer, I see his filthy face! And it is my face, and yours Danforth! For them that quail to bring men out of ignorance, as I have quailed, and as you quail now when you know in all your black hearts that this be fraud – God damns our kind especially, and we will burn, we will burn together! (Miller: 393)”

“The Crucible” successfully dramatizes Proctor’s quest for identity. Like Newman and Keller, Proctor is seen in the end committed to his social responsibility, though ironically he is more isolated than he was before. The action of the play clearly indicates that Proctor has not lost his conscience and thus, he is not a betrayer. His final choice to die should not be seen as the inevitable remedy for the atonement of his guilt. He dies not so much out of guilt, as out of his public responsibility. The transformation of a private guilt into a social responsibility is the characteristic feature of Proctor’s search for identity. Proctor’s sense of responsibility is revealed in the following words:

“I have three children - How may I teach them to walk like men in the world, and I sold my friends? Beguile me not! I blacken all of them when this is nailed to the church the very day they hang for silence (Miller: 401).”

Thus, Proctor’s death is not heroic; it is emblematic of his public ‘self’ and his strong sense of social responsibility. The play shows the subtle influence of social and psychological factors on the ‘self’ of an individual and how amidst a situation of social crisis, an individual is able to attain self-awareness. John Proctor is a self-aware character who struggles to assert his identity and worth as an individual in the content of public terror and finds himself unexpectedly undergoing a hard reassessment of ‘self’. Though clearly a respected man in the community, Proctor’s moral code derives from his own conscience, not from the Reverend Mr. Parris’s fire- and brimstone sermons.

Elizabeth is the image of a “cold wife”, who is responsible for provoking her husband Proctor to indulge in adultery, which eventually takes him to the gallows. Elizabeth’s self-awareness consists in her complete reversal of her attitude to her husband, which is accompanied by her guilt for being unemotional in marriage. In a sense, Elizabeth’s character is parallel to the character of Danforth. As Danforth is detached to the issue of witches and the community, so is Elizabeth in relation to John and Abigail. Elizabeth is unable to judge

her husband adequately, because like the judiciary, she too much relies on “evidence”. It can also be argued here that, the character of Elizabeth intensifies the pervasive effect of the irrationality of the judiciary, as Elizabeth sits in judgment over her husband’s guilt, which is reflected in the following conversation:

PROCTOR: I cannot speak but I am doubted, every moment judged for lies, as though I come into a court when I come into this house.

ELIZABETH: John, you are not open with me. You saw her with a crowd, you said, (Miller, 1957: 369).

Like Proctor, Elizabeth too undergoes a self-realization of guilt:

“I have read my own heart this three months, John. I have sins of my own to count. It needs a cold wife to prompt lecheryyou take my sins upon your, John..... John, I counted myself so plain, so poorly made, no honest love could come to me! Suspicion kissed you when I did; I never knew how I should say my love. It was a cold house I kept! (399).”

Elizabeth not only recognizes her guilt as a wife, but also her responsibility in leading Proctor to seek fulfillment of love through adultery. On realizing her responsibility in Proctor’s tragedy, Elizabeth’s search for self traces a trajectory similar to that followed by John Proctor, in simultaneously becoming aware of his own guilt and public responsibility. The self-awareness of Elizabeth is significant not only for herself, but also for Proctor, because Elizabeth’s final speech, in which she proclaims Proctor’s goodness, becomes a triumphant note on his tragic death. Although the law does not recognize his goodness, his wife does, which certainly makes Proctor’s death a triumph over the absurdity of the judicial process.

There is a crisis of ‘self’ in Danforth’s personality, which arises out of his firm conviction in the righteousness of the cause he stands for and his honesty in carrying out his mission. Danforth’s vision of the world is a closed vision, as has been said by Miller in Nelson (1970: 163):

In Salem, these people regarded themselves as holders of a light. If this light were extinguished, they believed, the world would end. When you have ideology, which feels itself so pure, it implies an extreme view of the world. Because they are white, opposition is completely black.

Danforth’s character, thus, can be better understood in terms of the *self-other* paradigm. His ‘self’ represents the negation of the ‘other,’ not out of hatred, but due to his extreme confidence in the infallibility of his *self* and the rawness, irrationality and profanity of the ‘other’. Danforth’s self-image suffers from the flaw of lopsidedness and a rigid mindset. This obviously is the impact of his profession, which does not allow for any human and intuitive considerations. Truth, for Danforth, is not to be sought for itself, but as a by-product of the legal

procedure. Danforth becomes very vulnerable, quite paradoxical to criticism, because his ‘self’ is deeply rooted in the legal machinery. His appearance clearly reflects his ‘official self’. The following interrogation of Giles Corey reveals Danforth’s self-conscious character.

DANFORTH: Who is this man?

GILES: My name is Corey, Sir, Giles Corey. I have six hundred acres and timber in addition. It is my wife you be condemning now.

DANFORTH: And how do you imagine to help her cause with such contemptuous riot? Now be gone. Your old age alone keeps you out of jail for this.

GILES: They be tellin’ lies about my wife, Sir, I

DANFORTH: Do you take it upon yourself to determine what this court shall believe and what it shall set aside?

GILES: Your Excellency, we mean no disrespect for-

DANFORTH: Disrespect indeed! This is disruption Mister. This is the highest court of the Supreme Government of this province, do you know it? (Miller: 381).

It is clear from the interrogation of Giles that Danforth resists any critique of law and court, because his ‘self’ is located in the impersonal law and the court, which executes the law. Any covert or overt criticism of the legal process is seen by him as an attack on his ‘self’. The problem of self-dramatization in the character of Danforth is the frigidity of one’s thought process. Danforth is reluctant to acknowledge the presence of any new knowledge other than the one he possesses. He does not recognize the role of intuition in understanding the phenomena around oneself. In this sense, he presents a contrast to both Proctor and Elizabeth, who are able to think differently, in tune with the changed or changing circumstances. Danforth reflects the case of fusion of the self with his mission. Although Hale, who also was committed to the trials, rejects the trials, Danforth does not. This is because Danforth associates the authenticity of the trials to the legitimacy of his ‘self’, therefore, giving up the trials tantamount to the negation of his ‘self’. For Proctor and Elizabeth the trials lead to successive self-realizations, which bring about a change in their perception of the world and also in their relationship with each other. Different critics have given different views on Proctor’s character. Walker (qtd.in Bloom, 1999: 114) believed that “Proctor’s character is like a classic tragic hero whose tragic flaw is his illicit relationship with Abigail”. Porter (qtd.in Bloom, 1999: 114) saw him “as an agrarian hero whose work ethic and ties to the land elicit the sympathy of the audience”. Meserve (qtd.in Bloom, 1999: 114) viewed Proctor “as a character who is adamantly in conflict with the social system”. O’ Neal added that Proctor’s forced involvement in events that he tries to remain aloof from leads to the personal crucible — in which he discovers his essential ‘goodness’” (qtd. in Bloom, 1999: 114). Thus, Proctor’s development in the play takes the form of a journey to self-discovery, classically illustrating Carl Jung’s process of

individuation.

According to Jung's theory in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, each individual possesses certain archetypes, images of the repressed aspects of one's personality. During the process of individuation, an individual moves from the superficial level of the persona, which is the mask shown to society, to the deepest, most inner archetype. In order to individuate successfully, a person must confront and accept these archetypal images. Fordham (1987) pointed out that the unconscious contains innumerable archetypes, but we can become somewhat familiar only with those which seem to have the greatest significance and most powerful influence on us). While the contents of the unconscious are infinite, the most powerful archetypes confronted during individuation are the shadow, the anima/animus, the wise old man/earth mother, and the self. The first of these four powerful archetypes, the shadow, represents the animal urges, civilized desires, uncontrolled emotions, and other feelings that we repress because society does not accept them. The second archetype, the anima/animus portrays elements of the masculine personality. Third, the wise old man/earth mother figure represents wisdom from within. After confronting and accepting these three images, the archetypal self unifies these dissimilar elements of the personality (49-62). Having accepted these repressed personality traits, the individualized person can act not simply as a surface persona, but as a complete individual reconciled to all aspects of life. John Proctor individuates from the persona he shows to his society, through the archetypes represented by other characters in the play, and finally to the self, a point reached when he decides to die an honourable death. Fordham (1987) explains the persona as "the mask worn by an individual to signify the role being played in society. The persona displays those traits expected of a person in a certain position" (48). Proctor, a farmer and a land-owner, displays a strong, respectable persona. Miller describes him as having a "steady manner," a "quite confidence," and an unexpressed, hidden force" (18). While the people of Salem look at Proctor as a strong, hard-working, no-nonsense man, Proctor himself knows that he is an adulterer, a lecher with a crisis; however, will he leave the persona behind and begin the process of individuation.

To put it differently, John Proctor has the essential characteristics of a literary mind. He is capable of imagination and playfulness, and as such people are always dangerous and disruptive. Plato would banish the poet from his public because of his imaginative power to arouse our passions. The church forced Galileo to retract his revolutionary theory of the revolution of the heavens by merely exploiting his own imagination, as Bronowski (1967: 214-216) pointed out, 'He was to be shown the instruments of torture as if they were to be used'. "With Galileo's medical background, his imagination could do the rest. That was the object of the trial, to show men of imagination that they were not immune from the process

of primitive, animal fear that was irreversible".

Finally, Proctor is confronted with the 'self', that archetype that unifies all the others, which "unites all the opposing elements in man and woman, consciousness and unconsciousness, good and bad, male and female" (Fordham, 1987: 62). For Proctor, the 'self' is represented by the name, not just for himself, but also for others. O' Neal (qtd.in Bloom, 1999: 114) has explained name magic" as the name's being more than a mere symbol of a person, actually the person. As Huftel (1965: 131) has asserted, "a man's name is his conscience, his immortal soul, and without it there is no person left". Miller uses the character of Hale to blend the personal and the social concerns in the play. At a personal level, Hale exhibits the missionary zeal, at the social level, he is able to view the whole tragedy emanating from the Salem hysteria from the point of view of the general public and more notably, from the point of view of the accused. Thus, Hale is both an insider and an outsider. His particular position in the play invites an investigation in terms of his search for identity. On a larger scale, Miller brings together the forces of personal and social malfunction through the arrival of the Reverend John Hale, who appears, appropriately, in the midst of a bitter quarrel among Proctor, Parris, and Thomas Putnam over deeds and land boundaries.

In terms of search for identity, Hale represents a balance between Danforth and Proctor. While Danforth is too adamant to change his position on the issue, Hale is quick to dissociate himself from the inhuman legal process. He says, "I denounce these proceedings. I quit the court!" (Miller: 393). His openly denouncing the court is the most visible indicator of his achieving self-realization, though it was too late. In spite of his dissociation from the trials, Hale cannot be equated with Proctor, as has been expressed by Nelson (1970: 171): "Hale lives in the comprehension of his unworthiness; Proctor dies in the awareness of his value." Hale tries to retrieve his lost self by earnestly imploring Elizabeth to convince Proctor to choose life, saying, "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" (398). This clearly reflects a profound change in Hale's 'self'. However, his search for self does not lead either to his rising above the guilt of siding with the wrong nor is he able to stand by a cause.

Thompson (1976) pointed out that, Miller's protagonists struggle within themselves to find out the reason of not gaining a "rightful place". They are faced up with the questions of blame, of moral certitude as they painfully search their inner selves and outside forces for the answers to what "hedges" and "lowers" them, denying them "self-realization."

CONCLUSION

The study reveals the differential effects on the selves of

the characters involved in the historical moment of a social crisis. It also displays a complex interface of personal, social, psychological, moral and political factors in the search for identity. The choice of a historical moment facilitates the exposition of Miller's hypothesis about self, because the Salem history simultaneously creates a distance and proximity of the audience to the subject matter of the play. The emphasis in 'The Crucible' is on the external aspect of human behavior, on an individual's actions, though it is true that ultimately these actions can be traced to be originating from a particular inner being. The study displays Miller's basic attempt who wants to show man struggling against the society of which he himself is a part. This is the most valid and fertile soul-soil of his dramaturgy. At one point Hogan (1964: 9) remarked, "The one thing a man fears most next to death is the loss of his good name. Man is evil in his own eyes, my friends, worthless and the only way he finds respect for himself is by getting other people to say he is a nice fellow".

Finally, the study has tried to show the inevitability of public intrusion into private 'self', and has attempted to highlight the quest for self-understanding in the play, which revolves round the protagonist's efforts and his subsequent failure in maintaining a boundary between his private 'self' and his public role. However, the life has to flow ahead with all its ups and downs, as Goethe says, "the whole art of life consists in giving up our existence in order to exist" (Bishop, 2009: 171). The study reaches its conclusion by showing that, an individual under different unsatisfactory circumstances starts having conflicts with his existing 'self' and tries to search for a new identity.

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