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## The Reliability And Validity Of Pride in The Crucible

As centuries, or millenniums I should say, have progressed there has been absolutely no human being who has completed any journey with clean hands. Mistakes are inevitable. It is a conventional individualistic human activity that occurs unknowingly. However there is a difference between acknowledging the fact that you did something wrong vs acknowledging the fact that you did something wrong and not doing anything about it. Leaving it as it is while you are at state of being fully conscious of. Which is where the term "pride" begins to be pertinent. The year of 1692 is where Purist Salem, Massachusetts, underwent an unfortunate incessant phenomenon of witchcraft accusations and trials. The Crucible, written by Arthur Miller, narrates the numerous ways in which such incidents have occurred. In Sophocles' *Antigone*, the character Tiresias wrote, "Think: all men make mistakes, but a good man yields when he knows his course is wrong, and repairs the evil: the only crime is pride." In the profound excerpt, Tiresias is asserting that by nature it's clear that individuals will make mistakes, simply because they are human, however, only a wise person will come to the realization that they have made that mistake and recognize that their continuous substandard actions are erroneous. A good man is bound to make mistakes, however, Tiresias fails to grasp that not every good man is willing to die for them. Tiresias makes this affirmation in order to show that the excerpt is valid, and the examples of this can be seen in the pride of John and Elizabeth Proctor from the play *The Crucible*.

Throughout the play, pride reappears as a relevant theme which also leads to unfortunate adversities among the characters. John and Elizabeth Proctor have a strained relationship. Not stable whatsoever. Unnecessary conflict is a never ending dilemma. Elizabeth has absolutely no trust over John ever since she found out about the affair he had with Abigail, a woman who lies in order to conceal her affair and prevent charges of witchcraft. Elizabeth now has difficulty in forgiving John for what he did. Act II opens with John and Elizabeth having a dispute as she prepares his food. He did not seem to enjoy it, so he further seasons it while she is turned away. This small symbolic gesture comes to show that he is making an effort to improve the situation in their relationship. By being a civil and wise man he sat his pride aside in order to prevent any upcoming controversy that could've have occurred. He desires to mend his relationship with his wife Elizabeth. In spite of that, Elizabeth attempts to speak with John regarding the accusations, but regrettably the conversation becomes uneasy as a disputation arises. Elizabeth loses all faith in John, as she is living with a man who betrayed her. She feels as if John does not want to prove to her that Abigail is a fraud because of their previous relationship. It is obvious, yet unfortunate, that John is upset at her lack of trust, so he took it as a chance for him to vent all his frustration. As they evidently end up in an argument John, with all irritation built up, tells Elizabeth, "You will not judge me more, Elizabeth. . . Let you look to your own improvement before you go to judge your husband any more" (II, 54). He explodes as he is expressing his emotions effectively. He further refers to their house as a court which shows that he feels that Elizabeth is constantly judging him and he has no escape from it. In other words, John is fed up with the entire situation. He is tired of the ongoing arguing that is futile, due to the feeling of incapability of producing any useful result. His anger continues building as he says, "You forget nothin' and forgive nothin'. . . Your justice would freeze beer!"(II, 54-55). It is relevant that he says "beer" because, unlike water, beer is not pure. Regrettably, John allows his pride get in the way of comprehending his wife's feelings which as

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shown, created more tension. Moreover, in the end of this act, Elizabeth has been accused of witchcraft and John comes to defend her verbally.

Despite the difficulties that rage between the two, Elizabeth, just like any other wife in her shoes, wants to save their relationship. Elizabeth attempts to let John know that Abigail is after her for the reason that she wants Elizabeth dead in order for her to be the one left with John. Which lead to an argument. John angrily yells at Elizabeth over the fact that she can't seem to let his mistake go and she responds with, "You'll tear it free— when you come to know that I will be your only wife, or no wife at all! She has an arrow in you yet, John Proctor, and you know it well!"(II, 62). Here, Elizabeth furiously explains how Proctor needs to understand that she, Elizabeth, is his only wife, that Abigail can no longer be a part of the picture or he's going to end up losing her. John cheating was unfortunately detrimental to Elizabeth. She was awfully hurt by her husband, and to make matters worse, her pride added more strain to the unstable relationship they already have. In act III, after Elizabeth has been taken and jailed, John confesses his sin in the court to demonstrate his moral character and a truth that only Elizabeth would know, but she lies to protect his name. With this, it is obvious that they are both putting in effort to atone for their mistreatment of each other. However, by act IV, John is now in jail as well. Elizabeth is pregnant, and the baby belongs to John. Perhaps this symbol of new life may demonstrate that their relationship can begin anew, although the government has them bound away from each other. Elizabeth visits John the day he is supposed to be hung as he asks her for forgiveness for not confessing and she responds by stating, "it is not for me to give, John. I am-" (IV, 136). She refuses to accept his apology because she feels as if it's not her place to forgive him. Clearly, she doesn't feel the need to forgive him if he cannot forgive himself first, which is shown when she tells him, "...it come not that I should forgive you, if you'll not forgive yourself" (IV, 136). Elizabeth does not come to a realization that the only possible way Proctor will forgive himself, is if she herself forgives him. She does not understand that if she were to put her pride aside, as a sagacious person would do, her husband may have forgiven himself. Which is a substantial reason as to why pride is overly important in this play. The decisions one makes in state of being prideful or not does actually lead to certain consequences, good and bad.

Both Proctor and Elizabeth's pride was concealing them from seeing the truth in their situation. Elizabeth was blinded as she didn't feel the need to forgive her husband and Proctor couldn't see the need to reveal the truth about Abigail in order to end the accusations. As Proctor stated, "I will fall like a ocean that court! Fear nothing Elizabeth" (II, 78) he is demonstrating much pride as well as how he will rescue Elizabeth from the court. Proctor will do whatever is possible to save his wife. However, according to Danforth, the court burns away all the lies in order to spill the truth. They manipulate you in order to come clean. Proctor's temper became unbearable, as he threatens Mary Warren to confess that the girls are lying. In court he decides to confess adultery in order to save his wife, which is out of the extreme, having in mind their relationship before hand. When Proctor says "I speak my own sins; I cannot judge another. I have no tongue for it" (IV, 141), he is portraying what is simply said, he will not speak of others in the manners of judging or accusing other individuals if it is not himself. While Danforth, on the other hand, is attempting to convince him to prove his witness, but he will not do so. This comes to show the wise and enlightened side of Proctor, him putting his pride aside and stating something that is reasonably correct and agreed by most. In dealing with both Abigail and Elizabeth, we see John struggle to regain a sense of honor and goodness. As Abigail continues to insist that they revive their affair, Elizabeth continues to punish him. John becomes an accuser of both women. As he is hesitant to engage in the anger drama of Salem, the witch

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trials, he is seen to be in a pool of his own troubles. Ultimately, John has to stand alone as he walks to the gallows. At this point, he has survived relations with his former mistress and has found self forgiveness and forgiveness from his wife. But unfortunately, the telling of this truth earned him death, and Elizabeth watched in honorable pride that her husband did what a good man would do.

As individual human beings, perfection does not exist, there's no such thing. Everyone is flawed. However, as one makes a mistake it is in their own will to repair it. Allowing one's pride get in the way as well as lying about their wrongs may result in a worse outcome than the one they began with. Teiresias makes it clear that it is just fine to make mistakes, it happens. Nevertheless, it takes a good man to admit to his wrongs, while those who can't, find themselves in greater problems. The author gives this message to the readers in hopes that they'll find it relevant and view beyond the literal meaning of his words is ideal.

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