

The English Theatre  
Frankfurt



# *The Crucible*

*Hexenjagd*

A DramaClub production of the  
historical play by Arthur Miller  
directed by Michael Gonszar

playing from  
11th - 22nd August 2012

**Teacher`s Support Pack**

## A Note for the Teachers (Hinweise zu diesen Unterrichtsmaterialien)

- Unsere umfangreiche Materialsammlung geht auf **werkimmanente Interpretationsansätze** ein, liefert Informationen zum Autor und dem **historischen Hintergrund** des Stücks, sowie zu verschiedenen Aspekten **amerikanischer Geschichte und Kultur**. Sie bietet darüber hinaus **aktuelle Texte zu Themen wie politischer Folter, Exorzismus, Sexualität und Vorstellungen des Bösen**. Entdecken Sie gemeinsam mit Ihren SchülerInnen, wie durchaus freizügig die puritanische Gesellschaft in Bezug auf Sexualität sein konnte, und welche modernen Formen des Glaubens an das Böse und seine Austreibung es heute noch gibt. Die Texte eignen sich auch für **fächerverbindenden Unterricht** (Politik, Ethik, Religion, Geschichte).
- Darüber hinaus stellen wir Bezüge zu **unserer Inszenierung** her und richten den Blick mit besonderen Aufgabenstellungen auf das **theatrale Ereignis als Lesart des Textes** von Arthur Miller (Einführend A 3 p. 11: **Reading theatre - Understanding a Production**.) Kreative Schreibaufgaben ergänzen dabei gängige Arbeitsformen.
- Sie können dieses **Teacher`s Support Pack** auf Anfrage auch als Word-Dokument bekommen, um einzelne Texte/Aufgaben vor Ausdruck zu bearbeiten. Das bietet Ihnen auch die Chance, das Paket in der von Ihnen gewünschten Fassung an Ihre SchülerInnen digital weiterzuleiten. Das Bild- und Informationsmaterial kann den SchülerInnen dabei helfen, **sich einen Überblick über die relevanten thematischen Aspekte zu verschaffen und eigene Sichtweisen des Stücks zu entdecken**.
- Die Kapitel 1-4 des **Teacher`s Support Pack** sind auch für **Realschule bzw. Sekundarstufe Jg. 10/11 geeignet**. Verschiedene Links sowie Vokabelhilfen und unterschiedliche Arbeitsaufträge unterstützen die Erarbeitung der Texte. Die Themen der Kapitel 5 und 6 sind für Schüler in der **Q-Phase der gymnasialen Oberstufe** und selbstständiges Arbeiten konzipiert.

Bei allen Fragen bezüglich dieser Materialien oder Interesse an

- **Begleitworkshops zu einem Aufführungsbesuch** für Ihre Lerngruppe
- **Gespräche mit Schauspielern** nach der Vorstellung

wenden Sie sich bitte per Email an uns: [michael.gonszar@english-theatre.de](mailto:michael.gonszar@english-theatre.de)

Das Team von T.I.E.S (Theatre in Education Service) wünscht Ihnen viel Erfolg bei der Arbeit mit dem Teacher`s Support Pack. Wir freuen uns auf einen Aufführungsbesuch mit Ihrer Lerngruppe.

**Lea Dunbar, Karl Guttzeit, Michael Gonszar**

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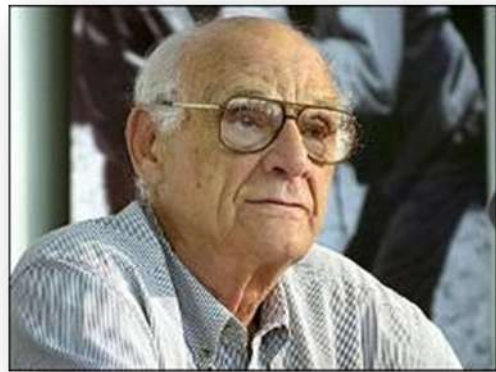
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## 1. The Author

In the period immediately following the end of World War II, American theatre was transformed by the work of playwright Arthur Miller. Profoundly influenced by the Depression and the war that immediately followed it, Miller **tapped into** a sense of dissatisfaction and unrest within the greater American psyche. His **probing** dramas proved to be both the conscience and **redemption** of the time, allowing people an honest view of the direction the country had taken.

**Arthur Miller** was one of the leading American playwrights of the twentieth century. He was born in October 1915 in New York City to a women's clothing manufacturer, who lost everything in the economic collapse of the 1930s. Living through young adulthood during the Great Depression, Miller was shaped by the poverty that surrounded him. The Depression demonstrated to the playwright the **fragility** and **vulnerability** of human existence in the modern era. After graduating from high school, Miller worked in a warehouse so that he could earn enough money to attend the University of Michigan, where he began to write plays.



**Death of a Salesman** (1949) secured Miller's reputation as one of the nation's **foremost** playwrights. *Death of a Salesman* mixes the tradition of social realism that informs most of Miller's work with a more experimental structure that includes **fluid leaps in time** as the protagonist, Willy Loman, drifts into memories of his sons as teenagers. Loman represents an American archetype, a victim of his own **delusions** of grandeur and obsession with success, which haunt him with a sense of failure.

Miller won a Tony Award for "Death of a Salesman" as well as a Pulitzer Prize. The play has been frequently revived in film, television, and stage versions that have included actors such as Dustin Hoffman.



Miller followed "Death of a Salesman" with his most politically significant work, **The Crucible** (1953), a tale of the Salem witch trials that contains obvious analogies to the McCarthy anti-Communist hearings in 1950s America. The highly controversial nature of the politics of "The Crucible", which **lauds** those who refuse to name names, led to the play's mixed response. In later years, however, it has become one of the most studied and performed plays of American theatre.

## VOCABULARY AIDS

### 1. The Author

**to tap into sth –to hit sth.**

*(etwas berühren,ansprechen)*

**probing – intended to**

**discover the truth** *(probing*

*questions -bohrende Fragen)*

**redemption –** *Versöhnung,*

*Wiedergutmachung*

**fragile – easily damaged,**

**broken**

**fragility-** *Brüchigkeit*

**vulnerability -***Verletzlichkeit*

**foremost-leading**

**fluid leaps in time-***fließende*

*Übergänge, Zeitsprünge*

**delusion -** *Täuschung*

**to laud -** *loben*

**to persecute –to pursue and**

**annoy s.o. continually** *(jmd.*

*verfolgen z.B. aus politischen*

*od. religiösen Gründen)*

**to testify –** *bezeugen,*

*aussagen unter Eid*

**allegedly -** *angeblich*

**to pen an adaptation –** *eine*

*Textfassung (für den Film)*

*schreiben*

**to garner – to win, to obtain**

**staunch – loyal, reliable**

**(standhaft)**

Three years after “The Crucible”, in 1956, Miller found himself **persecuted** by the very force that he warned against, when he was called **to testify** before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Miller refused to name people he **allegedly** saw at a Communist writers' meeting a decade before, and he was convicted of contempt. He later won an appeal. Also in 1956, Miller married actress Marilyn Monroe. The two divorced in 1961, just one year before her death.

Although Miller did not frequently write for film, he did **pen an adaptation** for the 1996 film version of The Crucible starring Daniel Day-Lewis and Winona Ryder, which **garnered** him an Academy Award nomination.

Arthur Miller died with the same dignity by which he had always lived, at his home in Connecticut on February 10<sup>th</sup> 2005, at the age of 89: a great writer, a **staunch** humanitarian, and a vital human being.

### Assignment 1:

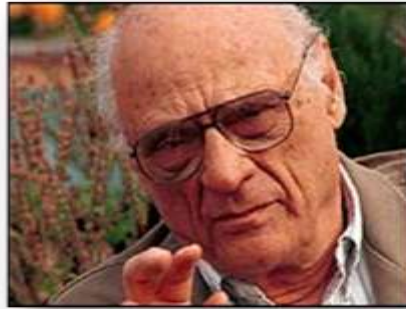
#### Understanding a text

1. Arthur Miller is generally recognized as one of America's greatest playwrights. What qualities make his works so notable?
2. Which personal and political circumstances have shaped Miller`s themes as a playwright?
3. THE CRUCIBLE reflects the political climate of the 1950's. How did that period affect the entertainment industry? How does the play speak to society?
4. What, according to his colleagues, made him a great artist?
5. Why did so many Americans feel insulted by his plays?



### Legacy of an 'American titan' – Miller as seen by his colleagues

The life of Arthur Miller, one of the foremost American playwrights of the 20th century, is now over. But thanks to his "unrivalled" contribution to world theatre, his legacy lives on.



Playwright David Hare said that Miller completed a triumvirate of writers who redefined the parameters of the American stage. "Arthur was the last of the three great theatrical voices of the American century - (Eugene) O'Neill, (Tennessee) Williams, Miller," he said. "Arthur's special achievement was to make political and social plays which belonged on Broadway and yet were also powered to reach out into America and way beyond."

Nicholas Hytner, artistic director of the Royal National Theatre, shared Mr. Hare's sentiments. "Arthur Miller was the last of the great titans of the American stage," he said. "He brought to the English-speaking theatre a poetic urgency and tragic sweep that had been absent since the Elizabethan era. I have no doubt that plays like *Death of a Salesman*, *The Crucible* and *A View from the Bridge* will always stand with the masterpieces of Ibsen, Shakespeare and Sophocles." Mr. Hytner, who directed the 1996 film version of *The Crucible*, said "the uncompromising morality of his world view", particularly in his later years, meant he was better appreciated outside his home country. America felt rebuked by him. Many Americans have felt insulted... his refusal to meet them halfway was the magnificent stubbornness of the great artist."

### Tapped into Zeitgeist

Miller's ability to tap into the American Zeitgeist, most notably in the post-war years and the McCarthy era, made him as much a social and cultural commentator as a dramatist. And his unlikely marriage to Marilyn Monroe briefly transformed him into a reluctant pop-culture icon.

But for theatre director David Thacker, it was his "capacity for empathy" that enabled him to reflect the hopes and dreams, and also the nightmares, of his audience. "His plays expressed the range of human experience and his incredible capacity to identify with people," said Mr. Thacker. "That's why he was such an important playwright for our time. He showed us what was possible about being a human being."

## 2. The Play

### 2.1 Characters

**John Proctor** - A local farmer who lives just outside town; Elizabeth Proctor's husband. A stern, harsh-tongued man, John hates hypocrisy. Nevertheless, he has a hidden sin—his affair with Abigail Williams—that proves his downfall. When the hysteria begins, he hesitates to expose Abigail as a fraud because he worries that his secret will be revealed and his good name ruined.

**Elizabeth Proctor** - John Proctor's wife. Elizabeth fired Abigail when she discovered that her husband was having an affair with Abigail. Elizabeth is supremely virtuous, but often cold.

**Two Boys** - Sons of Elizabeth and John Proctor

**Mary Warren** - The servant in the Proctor household and a member of Abigail's group of girls. She is a timid girl, easily influenced by those around her, who tried unsuccessfully to expose the hoax and ultimately recants her confession.

**Reverend Parris** - The minister of Salem's church. Reverend Parris is a paranoid, power-hungry, yet oddly self-pitying figure. Many of the townsfolk, especially John Proctor, dislike him, and Parris is very concerned with building his position in the community.

**Betty Parris** - Reverend Parris's daughter. Betty falls into a strange stupor after Parris catches her and the other girls dancing in the forest with Tituba. Her illness and that of Ruth Putnam fuel the first rumors of witchcraft.

**Abigail Williams** - Reverend Parris's niece. Abigail was once the servant for the Proctor household, but Elizabeth Proctor fired her after she discovered that Abigail was having an affair with her husband, John Proctor. Abigail is smart, wily, a good liar, and vindictive when crossed.

**Tituba** - Reverend Parris's slave from Barbados. Tituba agrees to perform voodoo at Abigail's request.

**Thomas Putnam** - A wealthy, influential citizen of Salem, Putnam holds a grudge against Francis Nurse for preventing Putnam's brother-in-law from being elected to the office of minister. He uses the witch trials to increase his own wealth by accusing people of witchcraft and then buying up their land.

**Ann Putnam** - Thomas Putnam's wife. Ann Putnam has given birth to eight children, but only Ruth Putnam survived. The other seven died before they were a day old, and Ann is convinced that they were murdered by supernatural means.

**Mercy Lewis** - Housemaid with the Putnams.

**Susanna Walcott** - One of the girls in Abigail's group

**Rebecca Nurse** - Francis Nurse's wife. Rebecca is a wise, sensible, and upright woman, held in tremendous regard by most of the Salem community. However, she falls victim to the hysteria when the Putnams accuse her of witchcraft and she refuses to confess.

**Reverend John Hale** - A young minister reputed to be an expert on witchcraft. Reverend Hale is called in to Salem to examine Parris's daughter Betty. Hale is a committed Christian and hater of witchcraft. His critical mind and intelligence save him from falling into blind fervor. His arrival sets the hysteria in motion, although he later regrets his actions and attempts to save the lives of those accused.

**Governor Danforth** - The deputy governor of Massachusetts and the presiding judge at the witch trials. Honest and scrupulous, at least in his own mind, Danforth is convinced that he is doing right in rooting out witchcraft.

**Assignment 2: Sharing information****Before seeing the show ...**

a)...divide the class into four groups **to prepare and present a synopsis** of Act I –IV. (If you do not have time to read the complete play, you may use the synopsis given below.)

b) **Explain important and useful vocabulary** to the class (f. ex. the words and phrases printed in green).

c) In addition **a characteristic dialogue from the script should be selected for each act and recited/performed** in front of the class. (see example for Act II on p. 13)

**Judge Hathorne** - A young local judge who presides, along with Danforth, over the witch trials. **Herrick** - The Marshal of Salem.

**Ezekiel Cheever** - A man from Salem who acts as clerk of the court during the witch trials. He is upright and determined to do his duty for justice.

**Giles Corey** - A farmer in Salem, famous for his tendency to file lawsuits. Giles's wife, Martha, is accused of witchcraft, and he himself is eventually held in contempt of court and pressed to death with large stones.

**Martha Corey** - Giles Corey's third wife. Martha's reading habits lead to her arrest and conviction for witchcraft. **Sarah Good** – a poor inebriate and outcast woman.

**2.2 Synopsis**

**Act I** In the puritan New England town of Salem, (Massachusetts 1692) a group of girls goes dancing in the forest with a Barbados slave named Tituba. Whilst dancing, they are caught by

the **local minister**, Reverend Parris. One of the girls, Parris's daughter Betty, falls into a **coma-like state**. A crowd gathers in the Parris home while **rumours** of witchcraft fill the town. Having sent for Reverend Hale, an expert on **witchcraft**, Parris questions Abigail Williams, the **girls' ringleader**, about the events that took place in the forest. Abigail, who is Parris's niece and ward, admits to doing nothing beyond "dancing."



**Daniel Day-Lewis as John Proctor, Winona Ryder as Abigail Williams,**

**in the 1996 drama film written by Arthur Miller and based on his play of the same name (directed by Nicholas Hytner)**



While Parris tries to calm the crowd that has gathered in his home, Abigail talks to some of the other girls, telling them not to admit to anything.

John Proctor, a local farmer, then enters and talks to Abigail alone. Unknown to anyone else in the town, while working in Proctor`s home the previous year she **engaged in an affair** with him, which led to her being fired by his wife, Elizabeth. Abigail still desires Proctor, but he **fends her off** and tells her to end her foolishness with the girls.

Betty wakes up and begins screaming. Much of the crowd rushes upstairs and gathers in her bedroom, arguing over whether she is bewitched. As the men argue, Reverend Hale arrives and examines Betty, while Proctor departs.

Hale quizzes Abigail about the girls` activities in the forest, grows suspicious of her behaviour, and demands to speak to Tituba. For fear of punishment Tituba confesses to communing with the devil, and she hysterically accuses various townsfolk of **consorting with the devil**. Suddenly, Abigail joins her, confessing to having seen the devil **conspiring and cavorting** with other townspeople. Betty joins them in naming witches, and the crowd is thrown into an uproar.

### Act II - A week later

Alone in their farmhouse outside of town, John and Elizabeth Proctor discuss the ongoing trials and the escalating number of townsfolk who have been accused of being witches. Elizabeth urges her husband to **denounce Abigail as a fraud**; he refuses, and she becomes jealous, accusing him of still **harbouring feelings** for her. Mary Warren, their servant and one of Abigail`s circle, returns from Salem with news that Elizabeth has been accused of witchcraft but the court did not pursue the accusation. Mary is sent up to bed, and John and Elizabeth continue their argument, only to be interrupted by a visit from Reverend Hale.

Officers of the court suddenly arrive and arrest Elizabeth. After they have taken her, Proctor **browbeats** Mary, insisting that she must go to Salem and **expose** Abigail and the other girls as frauds.

### Act III - The next day

Proctor brings Mary to court and tells Judge Danforth that she will testify that the girls are lying. Danforth is suspicious of Proctor`s motives and tells Proctor, truthfully, that Elizabeth is pregnant and **will be spared for a time**. Proctor **persists in his charge**, convincing Danforth to allow Mary to testify. Mary tells the court that the girls are lying. When the girls are brought in, they turn the tables by accusing Mary of bewitching them.

Furious, Proctor confesses his affair with Abigail and accuses her of being motivated by jealousy of his wife. To test Proctor`s **claim**, Danforth **summons** Elizabeth and asks her if Proctor has

## VOCABULARY AIDS

### 2. The Play - Synopsis

**a local minister** - der örtliche Geistliche, Pastor

**to fend s.o. off** - to reject (zurückweisen)

**to conspire with** - sich verschwören mit

**to cavort** - herumtanzen

**to browbeat**- finster ansehen, einschüchtern

**to expose** - entlarven, bloßstellen

**a claim** - Behauptung, Anspruch

**to summon** - herbefehlen, herbeizitieren

**to rejoice** - frohlocken, jubeln, glücklich sein

**to retract a statement, an admission** - eine Erklärung, Eingeständnis zurücknehmen

been **unfaithful** to her. Despite her natural honesty, she lies to protect Proctor's honour, and Danforth denounces Proctor as a liar. Meanwhile, Abigail and the girls again pretend that Mary is bewitching them, and Mary breaks down and accuses Proctor of being a witch. Proctor **rages against her** and against the court. He is arrested, and Hale **quits the proceedings**.



Arthur Miller's "The Crucible" at the Lyric, Belfast. Photograph: Steffan Hill

#### Act IV - Three months later

The witch trials have **caused unrest** in neighbouring towns, and Danforth grows nervous. Abigail has run away, taking all of Parris's money with her.

Hale, who has lost faith in the court, begs the accused witches to confess falsely in order to save their lives, but they refuse. Danforth, however, has an idea: he asks Elizabeth to talk John into confessing, and she agrees. Conflicted, but desperate to live, John agrees to confess, and the officers of the court **rejoice**. But he refuses **to incriminate** anyone else, and when the court insists that the confession must be made public,

Proctor grows angry, tears it up, and **retracts** his admission of guilt. Despite Hale's desperate pleas, Proctor **goes to the gallows** with the others, and the witch trials reach their **awful conclusion**.



### INFO 1: Prologue

1. Mr. Parris` house stood in “town” – but we today would hardly call it a village.
2. The meeting house was nearby, and from this point outward – toward the bay or inland –there were a few small-windowed, dark houses snuggling against the raw Massachusetts winter.
3. Salem had been established hardly forty years before.
4. To the European world the whole province was a barbaric frontier inhabited by a sect of fanatics who, nevertheless were shipping out products of slowly increasing quantity and value.
5. No one can really know what their lives were like.
6. They had no novelists – and would not have permitted anyone to read a novel if one were handy.
7. Their creed forbade anything resembling a theater or “vain enjoyment.”
8. They did not celebrate Christmas, and a holiday from work meant only that they must concentrate even more on prayer
9. Probably more than the creed, hard work kept the morals of the place from spoiling for the people were forced to fight the land like heroes for every grain of corn, and no man had very much time for fooling around.
10. That there were some jokers, however, is indicated by the practice of appointing a two-man patrol whose duty was to “walk forth in the time of God`s worship to take notice of such as either lye about the meeting house, or that lye at home or in the fields without giving good account thereof, and to take the names of such persons and to present them to the magistrates, whereby they may be accordingly proceeded against.”
12. This predilection for minding other people`s business was time-honored among the people of Salem, and it undoubtedly created many of the suspicions which were to feed the coming madness.
13. The edge of the wilderness was close by.
  
14. The American continent stretched endlessly west, and it was full of mystery for them.

### Assignment 3: Reading theatre - understanding a production

**Before seeing the show** ...divide the class into small groups and choose from the following observation focus/ tasks:

#### The PROLOGUE

1. There are no words in Part I, just movements and sound, action with props. Focus your attention to the theatrical signs as to

> Set >props >sounds >movements >light

What does the Prologue tell us about the young people of Salem? Describe the location and its meaning for the girls!

2. In Part 2 of the Prologue the actors have lines (*taken from Arthur Miller`s foreword – see > INFO p.10*) which they address to the audience before they assume their characters. What picture of the community of Salem is given here?

#### ACT I

**Act I** will introduce most of the major characters. Assign a character to each group (see the list on p. 8/9).

Students should pay special attention to the **words and the actions** of their characters.

1. What is the emotional response of the character to the events?

2. What motivates the character to behave as he/she does?

"What you see is what you get" is an expression meaning that a person does not try to hide his personality or goals. Is your character honest or full of hidden motives?

Have one member of the group summarize the findings and share those with the entire class.

3. Abigail confronts John Proctor. How do they act while talking to each other alone in I, 7? What comments build sympathy for her plight? Which lines lead spectators to see her in a negative light? (*See extract from Dialogue I,7 > INFO on p. 12*)

4. Part of the lines of the individual characters in Act I are spoken by a chorus in Act I. What

#### ACT II

1. How is the relationship between John Proctor and his wife introduced in II,1?

2. Elizabeth is deeply concerned about the witchcraft rumors and the court proceedings in the village?

3. Suspicion reigns in the Proctor household. What lines and which actions indicate Elizabeth`s doubts?  
How does John try to reassure her?

4. Mary Warren is trapped in between Abigail and the Proctors. How does she try to with cope that predicament?

5. Reverend Hale asks them what abomination has been hidden that might have brought this tragedy upon Salem? What would be the honest answer? Think about the actions of the men who questioned Tituba, the jealousies that surface in dialogue, and the scandals that are described .

6. One test used to prove evidence was the ability of the accused to recite Biblical passages and the Ten Commandments without fault. What is ironic about the attempt by John Proctor to meet the test? How does that show in his behavior/actions?

7. In the final scene of this act John Proctor is again confronted with Abigail. It is a meeting between "two worlds apart". How is this shown in the production?

8. Abigail says: ...*you burned my ignorance away. As bare as some December tree I saw them all – walking like saints to church and hypocrites in their hearts! And God gave me strength to call them liars. By God, I will scrub the world clean for the love of Him! Oh John, I will make you such a wife when the world is white again.* Does she have a clear and smart opinion on the hypocrisy of the villagers or is she an abused child turning mad? Support your view referring to the actions of Abigail in this scene!

9. The scene and Act II ends with a very emotional argument between John and Abigail. Can you explain this conflict?



## INFO 2: Script I, 7

ABIGAIL: (*Barring his way.*) Give me a word, John. A soft word.

PROCTOR: I come to see what mischief your uncle`s brewin` now. Put it out of mind, Abby.

ABIGAIL: John—I am waitin` for you every night.

PROCTOR: Abby, you`ll put it out of mind. I`ll not be comin` for you more. You know me better.

ABIGAIL: I know how you clutched my back behind your house and sweated like a stallion whenever I come near! I saw your face when she put me out and you loved me then and you do now!

PROCTOR: (*Taking her hands.*) Child...

ABIGAIL: (*With a flash of anger. Throwing his hands off.*) How do you call me child!

PROCTOR:

**CHORUS:** (*begins a quiet chant—a psalm.*)

PROCTOR: Abby, I may think of you softly from time to time. But I will cut off my hand before I`ll ever reach for you again. Wipe it out of mind—we never touched, Abby.

ABIGAIL: (*With a bitter anger.*) Oh, I marvel how such a (*Beating her fists against his chest.*) strong man may let such a sickly wife be...

PROCTOR: (*Coldly. Grabbing her wrists.*) You`ll speak nothin` of Elizabeth!

ABIGAIL: She is blackening my name in the village! She is telling lies about me! She is a cold sniveling woman and you bend to her!

PROCTOR: (*Shakes her.*) Do you look for whippin`?!

ABIGAIL: (*Shakes free.*) I look for John proctor that took me from my sleep and put knowledge in my heart. I never knew what pretense Salem was, I never knew the lying lessons I was taught. And now you bid me tear the light out of my eyes? I will not, I cannot! You loved me, John Proctor, and whatever sin it is you love me yet!





### 2.3 Arthur Miller:

#### "A Note on the Historical Accuracy of this Play"

This play is not history in the sense in which the word is used by the academic historian. However, I believe that the reader will discover here the essential nature of one of the strangest and most awful chapters in human history. The fate of each character is exactly that of his historical model, and there is no one in the drama who did not play a similar - and in some cases exactly the same - role in history. As for the characters of the persons, they may therefore be taken as creations of my own,

drawn to the best of my ability **in conformity with** their known behavior.

Salem (1692) had been established hardly forty years before. To the European world the whole province was a barbaric frontier inhabited by a sect of fanatics who, nevertheless were shipping out products of slowly increasing quantity and value. No one can really know what their lives were like. The edge of the wilderness was close by. They had no novelists and would not have permitted anyone to read a novel if one were handy. Their **creed** forbade anything resembling a theater or "**vain enjoyment.**" They did not celebrate Christmas, and a holiday from work meant only that they must concentrate even more on prayer. Probably more than the creed, hard work kept the **morals** of the place from **spoiling** for the people were forced to fight the land like heroes for every grain of corn, and no man had very much time for fooling around. A **predilection** for minding other people's business was time-honored among the people of Salem, and it undoubtedly created many of the suspicions which were to feed the coming madness.

Sex, sin, and the devil were early linked, and so they continued to be in Salem, and are today. Our

#### VOCABULARY AIDS

##### 3. Miller, A Note

**in conformity with** - in Übereinstimmung mit

**creed** - Glaubensbekenntnis, Überzeugungen

**vain enjoyment** - nutzloser Genuß, sinnlose Freuden (z.B. Würfelspiel, Rauchen etc.)

**spoiling morals**- verfallende Sitten

**predilection** - **preference** (Vorliebe)

**opposites** - Gegner

**robed in** - eingehüllt in

**demonology** - **Dämonenlehre**, Lehre von bösen Geistern, Teufeln

**to infuriate** - **to make angry** (in Wut versetzen, zur Weißglut bringen)

**disunity** - Uneinigkeit, Zerrissenheit

**exclusion** - Ausschluss, Ausgrenzung

**prohibition** - Verbot, Untersagung

**opposites** are always **robed in** sexual sin, and it is from this unconscious conviction that **demonology** gains both its attractive sensuality and its capacity **to infuriate** and frighten.

The Salem tragedy developed from a paradox.

#### VOCABULARY AIDS

#### 4. *The Crucible* Today

**explosive device** - Sprengkörper

**grudges** - Groll

**ritual outlet** - rituelles Ventil

(kulturell erlaubte Möglichkeit,  
Gefühle und Bedürfnisse auszuleben)

**surveillance** - observation

(Überwachung)

To prevent any kind of **disunity** that might open it to destruction by material or ideological enemies all organization is and must be grounded on the idea of **exclusion and prohibition**, just as two objects cannot occupy the same space. It is a paradox in whose grip we still live.

#### 2.4 "The Crucible" Today

(Production Notes, ETF Drama Club)

First produced on Broadway on January 22, 1953, the *The Crucible* was partly regarded a response to the panic caused by irrational fear of Communism during the Cold War which resulted in the hearings by the House Committee on Un-American Activities. In Miller's play, however, we see a lovelorn teenager spurned by the married man she loves, who fans a whole community into a blood-lust frenzy in revenge. This relationship works like an **explosive device** in this community full of underlying personal **grudges**.

Consequently the play casts a light on the intersection of private sins with paranoia, hysteria, and religious intolerance. The political structure of Arthur Miller's 1692 Salem is a theocracy, with the legal system based on the Christian Bible. Religion pervades every aspect of life, but it is a religion that lacks a **ritual outlet** to manage emotions such as anger, jealousy, or resentment. The citizens would consider the very concept of a private life heretical. Moral laws and state laws are one and the same; sin and the status of an individual's soul are public concerns. An individual's private life must conform to the moral laws, or the individual represents a threat to the public good.

Regulating the morality of citizens requires **surveillance**. Free speech is not a protected right, and saying the wrong thing can easily land a citizen in jail. Most of the punishments, such as whipping and hangings, are public, with the punishment serving to shame the lawbreaker and remind the public that to disagree with the state's decisions is to disagree with God's will. Anyone looking for contemporary parallels will invariably find them. Fundamentalism, repression and prejudice have endured and grown all over the world and taken new forms. Arthur Miller's statement: **"A political policy is equated with moral right, and opposition to it with diabolical malevolence. Once such an equation is effectively made, society becomes a congerie of plots and counterplots, and the main role of the government changes from that of the arbiter to that of the scourge of God."** provides us with a lucid analysis of so many contemporary civil and international conflicts including irrational outbursts of hatred and violence.

**Assignment 4 : History and Fiction - Discussing a Thesis**

1. Authors sometimes modify events to enhance the drama of a situation. Locate one or more major differences between the play and history (see Texts Nr.6.1. and 6.2 on pp. 35 - 40).

Why might a playwright take this literary license? Does your view of a character change with your knowledge of the actual history? If so, Give examples!

2. Explain the two theses by Arthur Miller (*printed in fat* at the end of 2.3 and 2.4) and discuss his views on political mechanisms of power and social structures.

3. The ETF Production Notes speak of “contemporary parallels” of “fundamentalism, repression and prejudice”. Relate current events from newspapers or internet sites to what took place in *THE CRUCIBLE*. Are there parallels between *THE CRUCIBLE* and present day? (see pp. 21 – 34 for support)

### 3. Interpretation

#### 3.1 Analysis of Act I

**In Puritan Salem, young women such as Abigail, Mary, and Mercy are largely powerless until they get married.** As a young, unmarried servant girl, Mary is expected to obey the will of her employer, Proctor, who can confine her to his home and even whip her for disobeying his orders.

Proctor, in his first appearance, is presented as a quick-witted, sharp-tongued man with a strong independent streak. These traits would seem to make him a good person to question the motives of those who cry witchcraft. However, his guilt over his affair with Abigail makes his position problematic because he is guilty of the very hypocrisy that he despises in others. Abigail, meanwhile, is clearly not over their affair. She accuses Proctor of “putting knowledge” in her heart. In one sense, Abigail accuses him of destroying her innocence by taking her virginity. In another sense, she also accuses him of showing her the extent to which hypocrisy governs social relations in Salem. Abigail’s cynicism about her society reveals that she is well positioned to take advantage of the witch trials for personal gain as well as revenge. Her secret desire to remove Elizabeth Proctor from her path to John Proctor drives the hysteria that soon develops.

Proctor’s inquiry as to whether Parris consulted anyone before seeking out Reverend Hale illustrates another constricting aspect of Salem society: the emphasis on public morality and the public good renders individual action suspect. Proctor’s question subtly insinuates that Parris has personal, private, motives for calling Reverend Hale. He compounds the tension between the two by hinting that Parris’s fire and brimstone sermons further the minister’s individual interests by encouraging people to obey him, lest they risk going to hell.

Parris is one of the least appealing characters in the play. Suspicious and grasping, he has a strong attachment to the material side of life. It is obvious that his emphasis on hellfire and damnation is, at least in part, an attempt to coerce the congregation into giving him more

material benefits out of guilt. Parris, Miller mentions in an aside to the audience, was once a merchant in Barbados. His commercialist zeal shows in the way he uses sin as a sort of currency to procure free firewood and free houses. He would have his congregation pay God for their sins, but he wants to collect on their debts himself.

Parris's desire to own the deed to his house is likewise telling. He explains his reasons in terms of the community's fickle attitude toward its ministers—in this, at least, he has a point. Before his arrival, the Putnams and the Nurses engaged in a bitter dispute over the choice of minister, a quarrel that offers ample evidence of a minister's vulnerability to political battles and personal grudges between families. However, Parris's claim that he wants only to ensure "obedience to the Church" is suspect, given that he reacts to disagreement with the church's edicts as though it were a personal insult. His allegation that Proctor leads a church faction intent on bringing about his downfall reveals that Parris is fairly paranoid. This paranoia, coupled with his actual political vulnerability, primes him to take advantage of the witch trials to protect his personal interests.

Rebecca's insistence to Proctor that he not "break charity" with the minister suggests that there are few ways to express individual disagreements in Salem because doing so is considered immoral. Feelings of jealousy and resentment have no outlet other than the court, which, in theocratic Salem, is also an institution of religious authority. The entire community of Salem is thus ripe for the witch trials to become an outlet for the expression of economic, political, and personal grudges through the manipulation of religious and moral authority. The land dispute between Proctor and Putnam adds the final touch to the implication that the real issues in the witch trials have much more to do with intra-societal and interpersonal concerns than with supernatural manifestations of the devil's influence.

**In a theocracy, part of the state's role is policing belief.** Therefore, there is a good deal of pressure on the average citizen to inform on the blasphemous speech of his or her neighbors in the name of Christian duty. Giles's claim to Hale that Proctor does not believe in witches does not necessarily arise out of a desire to do his Christian duty—he may only be making a joke. However, the very offhand nature of his statement indicates that reporting a neighbor's heretical words or thoughts is a deeply ingrained behavior in Salem.

Rebecca, a figure of respectability and good sense, fears that an investigation into witchcraft will only increase division within the Salem community. Parris's declaration that a thorough investigation could get at the root of all the community's problems proves accurate, though not in the way that he foresees. The witch trials do bring out all of the community's problems, but in the worst possible way. The specter of witchcraft allows citizens to blame political failures, the deaths of children, and land squabbles on supernatural influences. No one has to accept individual responsibility for any of the conflicts that divide the community or confront any of his or her personal issues with other individuals because everyone can simply say, "The devil made me do it."

Reverend Hale's reaction to Giles's story about Martha reveals the dangerous implications of a zealous witch-hunt. Ordinarily, reading books not related to the Bible would be considered an immoral use of one's time, but it certainly would not be interpreted as evidence of witchcraft. But with Hale present and the scent of witchcraft in the air, the slightest unorthodox behavior automatically makes someone suspect.

Abigail's reaction to the mounting pressure determines the way in which the rest of the witch trials will play out. Because she can no longer truly deny her involvement in witchcraft,

she accepts her guilt but displaces it onto Tituba. She admits being involved in witchcraft but declares that Tituba forced her into it. Tituba's reaction to being accused follows Abigail's lead: she admits her guilt in a public setting and receives absolution and then completes her self-cleansing by passing her guilt on to others. In this manner, the admission of involvement with witchcraft functions like the ritual of confession.

The ritual of confession in the witch trials also allows the expression of sentiments that could not otherwise be verbalized in repressive Salem. By placing her own thoughts in the devil's mouth, Tituba can express her long-held aggression against the man who enslaves her. Moreover, she states that the devil tempted her by showing her some white people that he owned. By naming the devil as a slave owner, she subtly accuses Parris and other white citizens of doing the devil's work in condoning slavery. Tituba is normally a powerless figure; in the context of the witch trials, however, she gains a power and authority previously unknown to her. No one would have listened seriously to a word she had to say before, but she now has a position of authority from which to name the secret sins of other Salem residents. She uses that power and authority to make accusations that would have earned her a beating before. The girls—Abigail and Betty—follow the same pattern, empowering themselves through their allegedly religious hysteria.

### **3.2 Personal guilt and social control**

By 1692, Salem has become a fairly established community, removed from its days as an outpost on a hostile frontier. Many of the former dangers that united the community in its early years have lessened, while interpersonal feuds and grudges over property, religious offices, and sexual behavior have begun to simmer beneath the theocratic surface. These tensions, combined with the paranoia about supernatural forces, pervade the town's religious sensibility and provide the raw materials for the hysteria of the witch trials.

On the surface, Parris appears to be an anxious, worried father. However, if we pay close attention to his language, we find indications that he is mainly worried about his reputation, not the welfare of his daughter and their friends. He fears that Abigail, Betty, and the other girls were engaging in witchcraft when he caught them dancing, and his first concern is not the endangerment of their souls but the trouble that the scandal will cause him. It is possible—and likely, from his point of view—that members in the community would make use of a moral transgression to ruin him. Parris's anxiety about the insecurity of his office reveals the extent to which conflicts divide the Salem community. Not even those individuals who society believes are invested with God's will can control the whim of the populace.

The idea of guilt by association is central to the events in *THE CRUCIBLE*, as it is one of the many ways in which the private, moral behavior of citizens can be regulated. An individual must fear that the sins of his or her friends and associates will taint his or her own name. Therefore, the individual is pressured to govern his or her private relationships according to public opinion and public law. To solidify one's good name, it is necessary to publicly condemn the wrongdoing of others. In this way, guilt by association also reinforces the publicization of private sins. Even before the play begins, Abigail's increasingly questionable reputation, in light of her unexplained firing by the upright Elizabeth Proctor, threatens her uncle Parris's tenuous hold on power and authority in the community. The allegations of witchcraft only render her an even greater threat to him.



**Having seen the show...****Assignment 5: Creative Writing (A review)**

A theatre production is one possible interpretation of a literary text. After having seen the show at the ETF and exchanged your observation results (see Assignment 3 on p.11) write a review of your own evaluating the achievements of the actors and the production! You might like to take the interpretation given above (pp.16/17) into account or look at an example for a review below.

Putnam, meanwhile, has his own set of grudges against his fellow Salemites. A rich man from an influential Salem family, he believes that his status grants him the right to worldly success. Yet he has been thwarted, both in his efforts to make his brother-in-law minister, and in his family life, where his children have all died in infancy. Putnam is well positioned to use the witch trials to express his feelings of persecution and undeserved failure, and to satisfy his need for revenge. His wife feels similarly wronged—like many Puritans, she is all too willing to blame the tragic deaths of her children on supernatural causes—and seeks similar retribution for what she perceives as the malevolent doings of others

**3.3            A *CurtainUp* Review** by Elyse Sommer

**THE CRUCIBLE** BY ARTHUR MILLER    Directed by Richard Eyre at the Virginia Theater Broadway New York 2002

*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!*

---John Proctor's Act IV explanation of why he cannot confess to witchcraft to save himself from the gallows.

Sad to say Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* is not reliant on the political situation that seeded it -- the McCarthy hearings during which people were coerced into accusing friends and colleagues of Communist affiliation. The toxic fallout of intolerance and group hysteria can be seen in many events postdating the McCarthy witch hunting days. The recent rash of articles about the cruel clannishness of teen aged girls give Miller's use of Abigail Williams and her little circle of friends as stand-ins for the accusatory House Un-American Activities committee has an almost eerie prescience. And while we've come a long way from the puritanical sexual mores that darkened John and Elizabeth Proctor's marriage and still prevailed in the 1950s, our high divorce rate proves that men and women still have trouble communicating with each other.

All the above is to say that no, you don't have to be old enough to remember the "naming

names" period that understandably outraged Miller. His outcry against intolerance is still one to which, to quote Willy Loman's wife, "attention must be paid." In fact, I think this 50th anniversary revival will probably speak most poignantly to those who have never seen the play -- and for whom dramas with large casts and stagecraft budgets, towering emotions and a rousing heroic climax are rare treats. For all its worthiness and enduring timeliness, *The Crucible* is Miller at his most melodramatic and preachy. The slow-to-get-going first act makes Linda Loman's demand to pay attention something of a challenge. (At the risk of making this review equally slow-starting, I've put a plot summary at the end of the production notes below). But the play does catch fire in the middle, and takes full hold of your heart in its almost biblical final scene. Naturally, a fiery actor to portray the pivotal figure of John Proctor and strong staging and production values, will have the play's power override that slow start.

Liam Neeson more than fulfills one's highest expectations for a physically and emotionally powerful John Proctor. While Paul Gallo's dark though evocatively moody lighting at times make it hard to see the large cast's faces, Neeson's rugged features register every emotion with utmost clarity. His tall muscular body and portrayal of Proctor's fiercely independent spirit and sexuality dominate the stage. It's as if Tim Hatley's handsome and monumentally proportioned wooden set was built to accommodate this mountain of a man, who though shackled and with hair shorn, Samson-like, rises like a phoenix in the explosive finale.

Neeson's voice too resonates to the furthest reaches of the theater which, can't be said for some of the supporting cast, especially the women who tend to screech. Of course, no one ever has to strain to hear every booming word spoken by that omnipresent actor, Brian Murray who is ideally cast as Deputy Governor Danforth.

Neeson's co-star Laura Linney, rises to the required nobility but for most of the play she is kept from making a strong impression by the reserve of her character and the dark look-alike Puritan costumes. Except for the above comment about an excess of screeching, the cast overall provides sturdy support. Among the women, Helen Stenborg as Rebecca Nurse and Jennifer Carpenter as Mary Warren merit special praise. Noteworthy among the men are Christopher Evan Welch as the unctuous Reverend Parris (though this fine actor seems to be getting typecast in these not particularly sympathetic roles) and John Benjamin Hickey as Reverend Hale, the ominous witchcraft expert who ultimately has a crisis of conscience.

Under Director Richard Eyre, *The Crucible*, is as Miller wrote it -- an old-fashioned play, exalting old fashioned grace under fire with plenty of sizzling emotions on display. It may not have as many quotable lines as, *Death of a Salesman* but like that masterpiece it is a rousing ode to the common man.

## 4 Themes

### 4.1 Intolerance

The *Crucible* is set in a **theocratic society, in which the church and the state are one, and the religion is a strict, austere form of Protestantism known as Puritanism**. Because of the theocratic nature of the society, moral laws and state laws are one and the same: sin and the status of an individual's soul are matters of public concern. There is no room for deviation from social norms, since any individual whose private life doesn't conform to the established moral laws represents a threat not only to the public good but also to the rule of God and true religion. In Salem, everything and everyone belongs to either God or the devil; dissent is not merely unlawful, it is associated with satanic activity. This dichotomy functions as the underlying logic behind the witch trials. As Danforth says in Act III, "a person is either with this court or he must be counted against it." The witch trials are the ultimate expression of intolerance (and hanging witches is the ultimate means of restoring the community's purity); the trials brand all social deviants with the taint of devil-worship and thus necessitate their elimination from the community.



### 4.2 Hysteria

Another critical theme in *THE CRUCIBLE* is **the role that hysteria can play in tearing apart a community**. Hysteria supplants logic and enables people to believe that their neighbors, whom they have always considered upstanding people, are committing absurd and unbelievable crimes—communing with the devil, killing babies, and so on. In *The Crucible*, the townsfolk accept and become active in the hysterical climate not only out of genuine religious piety but also because it gives them a chance to express repressed sentiments and to act on long-held grudges. The most obvious case is Abigail, who uses the situation to accuse Elizabeth Proctor of witchcraft and have her sent to jail. But others thrive on the hysteria as well: Reverend Parris strengthens his position within the village, albeit temporarily, by making scapegoats of people like Proctor who question his authority. The wealthy, ambitious Thomas Putnam gains revenge on Francis Nurse by getting Rebecca, Francis's virtuous wife, convicted of the supernatural murders of Ann Putnam's babies. In the end, hysteria can thrive only because people benefit from it. It suspends the rules of daily life and allows the acting out of every dark desire and hateful urge under the cover of righteousness.

### 4.3 Reputation

Reputation is tremendously important in theocratic Salem, where public and private moralities are one and the same. In an environment where reputation plays such an important role, the fear of guilt by association becomes particularly pernicious. Focused on maintaining public reputation, the townsfolk of Salem must fear that the sins of their friends and associates will taint their names. Various characters base their actions on the desire to protect their respective reputations. As the play begins, Parris fears that Abigail's increasingly questionable actions, and the hints of witchcraft surrounding his daughter's coma, will threaten his reputation and force him from the pulpit. Meanwhile, the

protagonist, John Proctor, also seeks to keep his good name from being tarnished. Early in the play, he has a chance to put a stop to the girls' accusations, but his desire to preserve his reputation keeps him from testifying against Abigail. At the end of the play, however, Proctor's desire to keep his good name leads him to make the heroic choice not to make a false confession and to go to his death without signing his name to an untrue statement. "I have given you my soul; leave me my name!" he cries to Danforth in Act IV. By refusing to relinquish his name, he redeems himself for his earlier failure and dies with integrity.

## 5    Culture, Human Rights and Religion

(Background texts for teachers or further studies for students)

### 5.1    Sex and Sin – History and contemporary discussion



#### 5.1.1 Sex and the Puritans (from: Bill Bryson, *Made in America*)

America's attitudes towards questions of public and private morality have long been a trifle confused. For this, as for so much else, we can thank the Puritans. As early as 1607, *puritanical* had come to mean *stern, rigid, narrowly moral*, and the view has been steadily reinforced ever since by history texts and literary works like Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* and Longfellow's *Courtship of Miles Standish*.

The Puritan age was, to be sure, one in which even the smallest transgressions –or even sometimes no transgressions at all- could be met with the severest penalties. Adultery, illegitimacy and masturbation were all at times capital offences in New England. Almost any odd occurrence darkened Puritan suspicions and fired their zeal for swift retribution. (...)

Unlucky was George Spencer of New Haven, Connecticut. When a one-eyed pig was born in the town, the magistrates cast around for an explanation and lighted on the hapless Spencer, who also has but one eye. Questioned as to the possibility of bestiality, the frightened Spencer confessed, but then recanted. Under Connecticut law to convict Spencer of bestiality required the testimony of two witnesses. So keen were the magistrates to hang him that they admitted the pig as one witness and his retracted confession as another.

But in many other ways colonial New England was not as (...) pure as we might think. Just half a century after the *Mayflower* Pilgrims landed on Massachusetts's shores, Boston was filled with prostitutes. (...)

Sex among the Puritans was considered as natural as eating and was discussed about as casually, to the extent that "the writings of the Puritans required heavy editing before they were thought fit to print even in the mid-twentieth century". Premarital intercourse was not just tolerated but effectively encouraged. Couple who intended to marry could take out something called the Pre-Contract – in effect a licence to have sex. It was the Puritans, too, who refined the curious custom of *bundling*, or *tarrying* as it was just as often called, in

which a courting pair were invited to climb into bed together. (...) Up to a third of bundling couples found themselves presented with a premature souvenir of the occasion. Nor did it necessarily mark the advent of a serious phase of relationship. (...)

Although never expressly countenanced, fornication was so common in Puritan New England that at least one parish had forms printed up in which the guilty parties could confess by filling their names and paying a small fine. By the 1770s about half of all New England women were pregnant at marriage.

### **Assignment 6: Creative Writing II – A Short Story**

Write a short story: **Abigail Williams Today**. Confront the heroine with a close person (parent, teacher, boyfriend) representing attitudes like in the text "The Truth about Sexual Sin" – (see below).

#### **5.1.2 The Truth about Sexual Sin - Seven Reasons to Save Sex for Marriage by WINKIE PRATNEY**

When was the last time your media ever told you the truth about sexual sin? No one on TV pays the price of illicit sex. No one in the movies gets herpes or AIDS when they jump into bed with their fun current partner of the moment. Nobody that sings the songs connects their "I want your sex" life-style with the constant pain, crazy rages and suicide. No one on video gets hurt, blown apart at heart or devastated when they casually throw away their future with their virginity. MTV plugs sexual songs, cultivates sexual situations, pushes you into "safe sex". Then it offers the almighty cure: use a condom. True lies. "Sex cures loneliness. Sex makes you feel good about yourself. Sex makes you happy. Sex is like a box of chocolates." Excuse me?

In the movies everybody is pretty, everybody looks good, everybody has great sex with anybody, anytime with no consequence. *Pretty Women* marry millionaires. (There's no sequel, because the marriage only lasts as long as the credits.) On screen, the famous "sexually active" athlete always gets the girl and he lives happily ever after. In real life he gets AIDS or goes to jail for rape or murder.

Only once in a long while will a man's single casual "*Fatal Attraction*" threaten his future peace of mind, his job, his home, the life of his whole family. Only once in a blue moon will you ever see what a "*Kramer vs. Kramer*" divorce does to a child and to both parents. Only now and then will a man from a people who "*Once Were Warriors*" learn that violence and immorality in a family lead to destruction and death.

Such rare exceptions to the rule of fantasy always hit a nerve. Somewhere deep in our souls we know what God says is true: "*Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.*" (1 Cor. 6:18-19) And judgment comes like Jason, when kids out only for a little illicit sex-play run into something wholly unexpected, terrifyingly impassive and invariably fatal. "*The*



*soul that sinneth, it shall die.*" (Ezek. 18:4)

Sleep with someone and *you sleep with everyone they've slept with*. Give yourself to someone sexually and you give away part of your soul that you will never get back.

Sex is never just sex. God says sexual sin is like nothing else in the book. It can hurt you physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. It can screw up your life in ways you would never have dreamed.

from: <http://www.goodmorals.org/pratney.htm>



#### **Assignment 7: Guided Writing and Acting**

- *Look at the picture above!*
- *If it was from a production of THE CRUCIBLE, which scene could be depicted?*
- *Alternative: Make up lines for the characters! Explicit statements for the figures in black, an inner monologue for the naked girl in the ropes.*

*Form it into a **symphony of voices**. Present it in class and discuss the result!*

## 5.2 Torture

### **Punishment of prisoners**

*Torture is a vile and depraved invasion of the rights and dignity of an individual, a crime against humanity, for which there can be no possible justification. Or can there? . . . The official justification . . . has always been the need to obtain information: from a criminal . . . from a prisoner taken in war . . . from a heretic. . . or from a terrorist . . . Sadly, the application of torture in such instances, in itself inexcusable, has been overshadowed by the fact that it is regarded also as a punishment.*

*Brian Innes, *The History of Torture*, 1998 We routinely treat prisoners in the United States like animals. We brutalize and degrade them, both men and women. . . . Very few Americans have raised their voices in opposition to our shameful prison policies. And I'm convinced that's primarily because the inmates are viewed as less than human.*

*Bob Herbert, "America's Abu Ghraibs," NY Times Op Ed, 5/31/2004*

*When some modern historians face the question of the twentieth-century revival of torture . . . they tend to interpret it as the result of new "religions," those of the secular authoritarian and totalitarian states, which exert a demand for total citizenship -- that is, total subjection -- upon their populations.*

*Edward Peters, *Torture*, 1985*

### **Naming names**

*Victims will, through the power of torture -- all the tortures that lie before them and fear of torture itself -- come to do evil, to name names. . . . Finally, in their torment, innocence will not matter to them, their own or that of anyone they are forced or enabled to implicate through lies. Truth itself will not matter, just as it has never mattered to the interrogator working for quotas, since lies are the product of torture.*

*Kate Millett, *The Politics of Cruelty*, 1994*

*They continued asking me questions, constantly the same ones: accomplices, addresses, meeting places. . . . What they wanted to hear from me in Breendonk, I simply did not know myself. If instead of the aliases I had been able to name the real names . . . probably . . . I would be standing here now as the weakling I most likely am, and as the traitor I potentially already was. Yet . . . I talked. I accused myself of invented absurd political crimes, and even now I don't know at all how they could have occurred to me.*

*Jean Améry, *At the Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and Its Realities*, 1966 (reissued in English, 1980)*

### **Political repression**

*Torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment harms individuals, sends a message of fear and intimidation to prisoners and members of minority political, ethnic, religious and belief groups, and undermines state legitimacy.*

*U.S. Mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), 11/17/1999*

*Granted, the torture of prisoners under Saddam Hussein was incomparably more widespread and often ended in death. The same is true in dozens of other regimes around the world. But torture is torture. It permanently scars the victim even when there are no visible marks on the body, and it leaves other scars on the lives of those who perform it and on the life of the nation that allowed and encouraged it. Those scars will be with us for a long time.*

*Adam Hochschild, "What's in a Word? Torture," NY Times Op Ed, 5/23/2004*

**Religious conformity**

*No organization looms larger in the history of torture than the Inquisition . . . With the right to arrest and interrogate whomsoever they chose, the Inquisition's authority quickly outstripped that of local bishops and clergy. And, like all great institutions, it was in no hurry to surrender any of its accumulated powers. . . Who can tell how closely the Inquisition adhered to the strict regulations supposedly governing its use of torture? Our experience of human nature suggests that, once granted, such licence is only too readily abused.*

*Michael Kerrigan, The Instruments of Torture, 2001*

*The word "Inquisition" means "inquiry" and all modern courts of law are inquisitions. The Holy Inquisition was a court set up by the Church of Rome to inquire into cases of heresy, though its use was later extended to include such crimes as witchcraft and ecclesiastical offences committed by members of the Church.*

*John Swain, The Pleasures of the Torture Chamber, 1931*

**Racial/ethnic "superiority"**

*In the American States . . . the law was so constituted that slave-owners had . . . a good deal of latitude in the matter of punishment. Like all laws made by one section of society for imposition upon another subservient section having neither the right to take a hand in the making of them nor the power to resist them when made, these laws were unilateral, unjust and noxious. They were deliberately made to aid the exploitation of one party by the other.*

*George Ryley Scott, The History of Torture Throughout The Ages, 1959*

*The history of torture among the Indians does not commence till after the arrival of the white races in America, as, previous to this, enemies not killed in battle were adopted into the tribe and in very rare instances tortured. No tortures were used by the Indians, even in the later days, other than those which had been used on them by the Spaniards.*

*John Swain, The Pleasures of the Torture Chamber, 1931*

*We were pretty much told that they [prisoners in Afghanistan] were nobodies, that they were just enemy combatants. I think that giving them the distinction of soldier would have changed our attitudes toward them. A lot of it was based on racism, really. We called them hajis, and that psychology was really important.*

*A member of the 377th Military Police Company, quoted by Douglas Jehl and Andrea Elliott, "Cuba Base Sent Its Interrogators To Iraqi Prison," NY Times, 5/29/2004*

**Intimidation**

*The military government that ruled Greece for more than seven years regularly inflicted physical and mental torture on its political prisoners. . . Torture was conducted by the security police . . . and the military police. The purpose at first seemed to be getting information. But the torture was additionally meant to intimidate those who suffered it and those who heard about it.*

*Steven V. Roberts, "Tortures of Junta Era Still Haunting Greeks," NY Times, 1/10/1975*

**Humiliation**

*The pillory and the stocks . . . represent variations of one principle: that of exposing the culprit to public degradation. Although, in many cases, confinement [on] either . . . could not be said to involve torture. . . The prisoner was not only helpless, but he was at the mercy of anyone who wished to injure or humiliate him.*

*George Ryley Scott, The History of Torture Throughout The Ages, 1959*

FROM: <http://groups.csail.mit.edu/mac/users/ella/notinmyname/chapter3.htm>



### INFO 4: Torture

*Torture has been used in the past as a means of extracting false or true confessions from malefactors, imagined or real, for compelling men and women to acknowledge or to disavow God Almighty and the Church, and for making witnesses bear false testimony against accused persons. . . . Methods of torture . . . were devilish in conception, extremely cruel in application and were applied to millions of unfortunate men and women.*

*Edwin J. Henri, *Methods of Torture and Execution*, 1966*

### Assignment 8: Research and Essay Writing

#### Write an Essay on “Torture”

- as a theme in “**The Crucible**”
- in history and present-day political structures relating to the quotations above and the text in 5.2.1
- in reference to the continuous fight for human rights in the world

Get more useful information from: <http://www.amnesty.org/>

### 5.2.1 Torture as a political tool

Contrary to popular belief, torture does not get people to talk. Rather, even if torture does make people say things, it does not reveal the “truth” in the sense that certain interrogators, political or military leaders, or even screenwriters might imagine it would. Doctor Duterte cites a patient who described being “forced to sign off on lies by making me believe that it was actually the truth, and I didn’t understand the point of that.” (*Terres Inhumaines*). « “One of the first patients I met with swore that he would have confessed to having killed Jesus Christ...” (*Terres Inhumaines*, p.27)

Moreover, the fact that torture itself is an atrocity makes the act unthinkable, which causes a silence to settle over those who have been tortured: in other words, the degree of cruelty



is so abhorrent that the victim is convinced no one will believe it. In fact, it is used as a living testimony of what may be awaiting his or her loved ones: **“a victim who is spared and set free becomes an involuntary messenger of horror...”** (*Terres Inhumaines*, p. 28).

Journalist Naomi Klein, in her book *The Shock Doctrine* (Metropolitan Books, 2007) aims to situate torture within a more

general context. Examining the experiments conducted by “Doctor” Ewen Cameron in Canada, she reminds her reader that Cameron’s intent was to “erase the personality” of the patients he was “treating” by subjecting them to intense electroshocks and sensorial deprivations in order to “rewrite” new values. His experiments provided the fodder for torture manuals used by the CIA (one of “Dr.” Cameron’s primary financial backers).

Naomi Klein deftly analyses the practice of torture and the recourse to “economic shock therapy.” Essentially, torture is an excellent weapon used to ensure that a country’s population consents to the total dismantlement of their economy and the loss of all its economic and social benefits, not to mention the complete dissolution of any semblance of democracy.

While this does not fully explain nor justify the spread of torture as commonly-used tactic, it allows us to see the Bush government's policies in a new light.

Modified on Friday 17 June 2011    Read more: <http://www.parcours-exil.org/Torture-as-a-political-tool.html>

See also: <http://libertarianreview.us/2012/06/01/military-to-avoid-torture-pics-by-banning-photography/>

## 5.3 Possession and the Evil

### 5.3.1 Exorcism: Contemporary Glimpses Catholic Church needs exorcists

**NEW YORK POST**    By TODD VENEZIA  
Sat., Nov. 13, 2010

The Roman Catholic Church is looking for a few good men -- to battle Satan.

The church in the US has become so short of priests who know how to perform an exorcism that it began an emergency two-day meeting yesterday to teach clerics how to properly cast out demons.

A group of 56 bishops and 66 priests -- including an assistant to New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan -- have gathered in Baltimore for the Conference on the Liturgical and Pastoral Practice of Exorcism. The mystical meeting was focused on a lot more than just dodging green vomit and stopping heads from spinning.

"Learning the liturgical rite is not difficult," said Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, archbishop of Houston, who is attending the conference. "The problem is the discernment that the exorcist needs before he would ever attempt the rite."

The number of US clerics who know how to do an exorcism has dropped dramatically in recent years, ever since the holy procedure became a laughingstock thanks to Linda Blair's head-spinning performance as a possessed girl in the 1973 film "The Exorcist."

The situation has gotten so hellacious that only five or six priests are left in the country with the knowledge to properly carry out an exorcism, the Catholic News Service reported.

But with numerous Catholic immigrants coming to the United States from nations where exorcisms are taken seriously, the church's handful of exorcists are being overwhelmed.

## INFO 5: The Forms of Evil

*Although most cultures believed in god and spirits that inhabit a spirit world, from the earliest time this non-physical realm has been shrouded in all forms of superstitions, primitive magic and myths. Now all cultures also believed that evil spirits could inhabit a physical body and influence human behavior. This usually resulted in a condition called "demonic possession" where the person's soul lost its will and these spirits performed their will.*

*Nowhere in the Old Testament is there an in-depth analysis or discussion of demons, their nature, origin, and their abode in the earth plane. The Old Testament only provides three instances where evil spirits plagued men. The first occurred when Lucifer appeared to Eve in the Garden. By lying to her, he caused her to violate the law of Elohim (Gn. 3:1-10). Second, Yahweh sent evil spirits to trouble Abimelech (Jud. 9:23) and the third happened when they troubled King Saul, the first king of Israel (1 Sam. 16:14-16).*

From: POSSESSION, by Dr. Lee Warren, B.A., D.D. June 1996



### 5.3.2 The Disturbing Exorcisms and Death of Anneliese Michel



**Anneliese Healthy and Young vs.  
Anneliese Close to Death**

Anneliese Michel was born in Germany on September 21, 1952. She grew up in a devoutly, somewhat extreme, Catholic family. Pictures of her taken in her childhood show a vibrant, pretty girl on her way to becoming a gorgeous woman. By the time she was 23-years-old, she was emaciated, heavily bruised,

scarred and deranged. She was supposedly taken over by demons and fought for nearly eight years before finally losing her battle with evil. Later, her death was labeled negligent homicide. Were those who were with Anneliese really fighting Satan?

Four years before Anneliese was born, her mother, Anna Michel gave birth to an illegitimate daughter. This was a source of shame for the Catholic family. After she married and gave birth to Anneliese, she apparently harbored feelings of guilt about her first daughter. Unfortunately, Anneliese's older sister died at the age of eight, but Anneliese reportedly felt like she needed to repent for her mother's sin. Anneliese's supposed symptoms of possession began in 1968 with convulsions. They were eventually diagnosed as epilepsy by a neurologist. Anneliese Michel took medicine for her condition and continued her life to the best of her ability. She finished high school and went on to college, where she studied to become a teacher. Apparently, the medicine was not helping her much. Her problems only got worse.

Over time, Anneliese complained of seeing disturbing visions while saying her prayers. Later, evil voices giving her commands followed. Finally, Anneliese began showing an aversion to religious iconography. In 1975, Anneliese Michel and her parents stopped seeking medical advice and gave over Anneliese's fate to the Roman exorcism ritual. Anneliese, the priests and her parents truly believed she was possessed. Anneliese Michel herself said that Judas, Nero, Hitler, Cain, Lucifer and others were inside of her. Over the next ten months, Father Arnold Renz and Pastor Ernst Alt performed 67 exorcisms for the tormented girl. It is important to note that every action taken during these rituals was condoned by Anneliese.

Sometimes, the seriously ill Anneliese would perform hundreds of genuflections during these rituals. It is rumored that her parents held her up for them when she got too weak to do it herself. It is not hard to imagine this being necessary, given that Anneliese stopped eating altogether for some time before she died. She believed it would lessen the evil's control over her. It is certain that medicine was not saving Anneliese Michel from whatever tormented her, but there is no questioning that things got worse for her when she gave herself over to exorcism. She allegedly urinated and defecated on the floor frequently, also licking up her own urine. She ate insects, growled at religious icons and sat under her kitchen

table barking for two days. Surely, her family was afraid of her, but a medical professional probably would not have left her under the table for two days or let her starve to death, which is eventually what she did.

Anneliese Michel died of dehydration and malnutrition on July 1, 1976. The 23-year-old woman weighed 68 pounds at the time of her death. Josef Michel (her father), Anna Michel and the two exorcists were eventually charged with negligent homicide. During the trial, evidence of the possession worked both for and against the defense.

April 8, 2011 by Shelly Barclay:

<http://historicmysteries.com/the-disturbing-exorcisms-and-death-of-anneliese-michel>

### 5.3.3 The Story of a Modern-Day Exorcist

From: TIME MAGAZINE Monday, Mar. 16, 2009 by GILBERT CRUZ



Swedish actor Max von Sydow performs an exorcism in a scene from *The Exorcist*

When he first heard about a Vatican-sponsored course on exorcism for priests, journalist Matt Baglio was intrigued by the idea of this ancient ritual taking place in the modern world. In his new book, *The Rite*, Baglio follows American priest Father Gary — sent to Rome to train as an exorcist — and his apprenticeship with Father Carmine. Baglio talked to TIME about belief, skeptical priests and the particulars of the exorcism ritual.

**TIME:** The thing that inspired this book was a class on exorcism. Tell me about it.

**BAGLIO:** I was a freelance journalist living in Rome and had heard about this course called Exorcism and the Prayer of Liberation. It was organized by the Legion of Christ and their school, the Regina Apostolorum, which is Vatican-affiliated. Not knowing anything about exorcism or if the Church even still believed in it, I was intrigued by the idea of a university-level course teaching priests about exorcism.

**What were your first thoughts about the class? Did you think, Wait a minute, this is the 21st century. Why are we even still talking about exorcism?**

Absolutely. My first thought was, Why is the church doing this class? Is it just a p.r. stunt? But then I saw that a lot of the course work itself was very theologically and historically based. None of it was practical, which is why Father Gary had to eventually go out and

apprentice with a veteran exorcist, Father Carmine. The course would bring in experts — experts in satanic cults, experts in criminology, they even had a psychiatrist come in to talk to the priests about the differences between the various mental illnesses that could be confused for demonic possession vs. what the church says is actually demonic possession.

**As we understand more and more about multiple personalities, epilepsy, schizophrenia and other mental illnesses, doesn't demonic possession get explained away?**

There's a definite degree to which that's true. You can't deny the fact that many illnesses in the past were misunderstood. The church has to be very careful about confusing mental illness with demonic possession.

**When you started the book, did you lean one way or another in terms of whether or not you believed in the possibility of exorcism?**

I came at this topic very journalistically, not having an opinion for or against it. I wanted to really understand what it is and why the church still believes in it. But even exorcists themselves admit that 90% of the people that come to see them don't need an exorcism. There still remains a small percentage of cases, however, involving levitation, mind-reading and other paranormal phenomena that can't be explained through science. Maybe one day.

**You write about how most priests don't even like to talk about exorcism, that they find the idea distasteful. Why is that?**

There's a lot of taboo when it comes to the devil and evil itself. Parishioners don't want to hear about Satan and evil and sin. Father Gary, he's in his 50s, and he was ordained in the late '70s. During that period, you had a lot of turmoil in conjunction with Vatican II shaking up the church and getting rid of many very old traditions, the Latin mass and those sorts of things. But you have to look at priests themselves as being creatures of their environment. Coupled with that were all these new psychoanalytical approaches that were uncovering a lot of things that in the past were considered to be in the realm of the spiritual. I think a lot of priests saw that and said, Let's just keep becoming more modern and more open and don't worry about all these "medieval things."

**And as a result, many exorcists are marginalized within the church.**

I had priests tell me that their superiors belittled the fact that they were exorcists. Interestingly, though, the newer generation of priests are more responsive to the reality of the devil, and a lot of that has to do with the fact that John Paul II was and Pope Benedict XVI is a little more conservative, so the younger seminarians are a little less apt to ridicule. The older priests of Father Gary's generation didn't want to talk about it.

**So how is a priest supposed to figure out that an exorcism is warranted? How do they judge who is and who isn't a worthy candidate?**

The ritual stipulates that there are three signs that the priest has to look for: abnormal strength, the ability to understand unknown languages and the knowledge of hidden things. But they're very arbitrary, even those things. So they have to be in concert with something else. And typically what priests look for is what they call the aversion to the sacred, which is a person's inability to pray, to say the name of Jesus or Mary, to even look at the priest. Typically, when the person comes to see them, it's the last thing they want to do. They tend to have gone to see many doctors in search of a medical cure for whatever is afflicting them. They don't believe that the problem is demonic. They don't come in and say, "Father, I'm

being attacked by demons. You need to pray over me." When someone says that to them, the priests immediately discounts that the problem is demonic.

**So what happens during the exorcism rite?**

The ritual, as its written, has several different stages to it. You say the litany of saints, you read the Gospel, you say a homily. The priest is allowed to bring in other elements if he wants to — the renewal of the baptismal vows, for example. But at the core of it are the exorcism prayers themselves, which are composed of the imperative and the depreciatory. The depreciatory involves the exorcist entreating God — "God, come down and bless this person." The imperative is the command, "I command you to leave this person." If you were to do the whole thing from start to finish, it would take out about an hour. But none of the priests that I followed in Rome do it like that. Almost all of them get rid of everything except the exorcism prayers. And the reason they do that is because they don't have time. They have a waiting room of 20 people. That's one day. The next day they have another 20 people.

**Most of the exorcisms that Father Gary witnesses are fairly low-key. What happens during the dramatic ones?**

If an exorcist sees 100 people, there are only going to be 2 or 3 that are dramatic. And I would characterize those as being when the person actually speaks to the exorcist. Quite often they'll be burping or belching or coughing or yawning. There's moaning and screaming too. But in the stronger cases, in almost every instance, you'll have the voice. The person will speak in a demonic voice, and they'll say things like, "This person belongs to us," "You have no power over us," "You can't defeat us." They are usually very dramatic in the sense that the person will be screaming at the top of their lungs. There can also be shaking. Picture a person sitting in a chair with their arms sticking straight out, their legs sticking straight out, convulsing. That's common.

But usually, the more dramatic cases deal with people who are screaming, using their voice, shoving and punching, getting up, smacking their head against the wall — just very violent. And that voice is beyond a simple mimic of a strange voice. It's very uncanny, very unnatural. And then, of course, there's vomiting, which is common. Father Carmine saw a case where a woman vomited up a small black toad that was still alive. He went to catch it, and it dissolved into saliva. I had another priest who I talked to who dealt with a woman who vomited up seven little black nails, six of which dissolved into this black liquid. Father Carmine saw a woman vomiting up buckets of human sperm.

**Don't you think that regardless of your book or the testimonials by these priests, there are many people who aren't going to believe that exorcism is valid?**

For people to just outright discount it is a little premature. I think that there's clearly something going on here. Even if you don't believe in the devil, how do you explain the paranormal? I would dearly love if science could really explain some of these things, but until then, the question is just too big to ignore.

Read more:

<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1885372,00.html#ixzz1vEx0fhta>

### 5.3.3 Can a Christian today perform an exorcism? What does the Bible say about casting out demons?

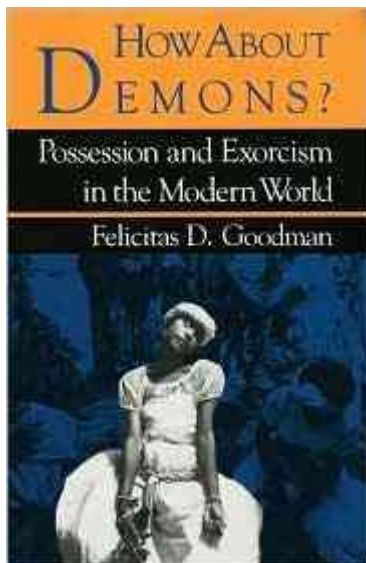
Exorcism (commanding demons to leave other people) was practiced by various people in the Gospels and the Book of Acts—the disciples as part of Christ's instructions ([Matthew 10](#)); others using Christ's name ([Mark 9:38](#)); the children of the Pharisees ([Luke 11:18-19](#)); Paul ([Acts 16](#)); and certain exorcists ([Acts 19:11-16](#)).

It appears that the purpose of Jesus' disciples performing exorcisms was to show Christ's dominion over the demons ([Luke 10:17](#)) and to verify that the disciples were acting in His name and by His authority. It also revealed their faith or lack of faith ([Matthew 17:14-21](#)). It was obvious that this act of casting out demons was important to the ministry of the disciples. However, it is unclear what part casting out demons actually played in the discipleship process.

Interestingly, there seems to be a shift in the latter part of the New Testament regarding demonic warfare. The teaching portions of the New Testament (Romans through Jude) refer to demonic activity, yet do not discuss the actions of casting them out, nor are believers exhorted to do so. We are told to put on the armor to stand against them ([Ephesians 6:10-18](#)). We are told to resist the devil ([James 4:7](#)), be careful of him ([1 Peter 5:8](#)), and not give him room in our lives ([Ephesians 4:27](#)). However, we are not told how to cast him or his demons out of others, or that we should even consider doing so.

The book of Ephesians gives clear instructions on how we are to have victory in our lives in the battle against the forces of evil. The first step is placing our faith in Christ (2:8-9), which breaks the rule of “the prince of power of the air” (2:2). We are then to choose, again by God's grace, to put off ungodly habits and to put on godly habits (4:17-24). This does not involve casting out demons, but rather renewing our minds (4:23). After several practical instructions on how to obey God as His children, we are reminded that there is a spiritual battle. It is fought with certain armor that allows us to stand against—not cast out—the trickery of the demonic world (6:10). We stand with truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, the Word of God, and prayer (6:10-18).

It appears that as the Word of God was completed, the Christians had more weapons with which to battle the spirit world than the early Christians did. The role of casting out demons was replaced, for the most part, with evangelism and discipleship through the Word of God. Since the methods of spiritual warfare in the New Testament do not involve casting out demons, it is difficult to determine instructions on how to do such a thing. If necessary at all, it seems that it is through exposing the individual to the truth of the Word of God and the name of Jesus Christ.

**Recommended Literature:**

Publishing Date: May 1988

Publisher: Indiana University Press

"Quite an interesting book... " — Religious Studies Review

"It is by far superior to anything else on demons we have seen in the past few years." —The American Rationalist

"... Goodman is to be commended for a stimulating and wide-reaching treatment of a compelling and much-debated subject." —Journal of Folklore Research

Rich in detail derived from the author's fieldwork and the anthropological literature, this work paints a picture of possession as one of the usually positive and most widespread of human religious experiences. It also details the ritual of exorcism, which is applied when things go wrong.

See also: <http://www.amazon.com/How-about-Demons-Possession-Exorcism/dp/0253204674>

## 6. Historical Background

### 6.1 Pilgrims, Puritans, Americans?

Much of what we know about the roots of American values arises from what we know — or, don't know — about the dissident Protestant sects that settled Massachusetts, the Pilgrims and the much more numerous Puritans. The fourth Thursday in November commemorates the earliest event in our national holiday calendar, the Pilgrim's thanksgiving for barely surviving their first winter in 1621. Many a Thanksgiving Day speech-maker hearkens back to these early New England settlers to understand America and to seek guidance for the American future.



Historians warn, however, that the Puritans were a strange group, one highly atypical of early America; they were perhaps more a cult than a community. Scholars have, in the words of one, "long since abandoned any interpretation grounding the American nation



in Puritanism.” Yet the Puritans may have left us something enduring besides the holiday and tourist sites: not a model for American community but an ideology for American culture.

### True Believers

The *Mayflower*’s Pilgrims in Plymouth and the Boston-area Puritans, often confused, were two different colonizing groups (see, for example, [here](#)). The Puritan settlers in the Massachusetts Bay Colony outnumbered Plymouth’s Pilgrim settlers by about 10 to 1 and absorbed them in 1691. It is mainly the Puritans and their descendants, such as the Minutemen of Concord, who form the popular image of America’s early settlers. Ronald Reagan, for example, famously borrowed the wish that “we shall be a city upon a hill” – to be a “new Jerusalem,” God’s light to the nations – from the speech leader John Winthrop gave aboard the *Arabella*, the ship taking the first Puritan settlers to the New World.

Thanks to the records the colonists left behind, the influence of Massachusetts, and the visibility of their descendants (Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Adams, and so on), we know a lot about the Puritans of the 17th century, more “than any sane person should want to know,” according to historian Edmund Morgan (cited [here](#)). We know that they were atypical of Early American settlers. For example, they lived in compact villages rather than spread out in homesteads; they were relatively isolated from world commerce; they were homogeneous; and they were sternly religious. Most distinctively, they lived in tightly-controlled communities, in what historian [Michael Zuckerman](#) has called “a totalitarianism of true believers.”

In the mid-1600s, at the zenith of their culture, Puritan villagers held land in common, belonged to a single and strong church, and resisted the intrusion of outsiders. They controlled individual behavior by fierce gossip, defamatory and often obscene billboards, and court suits. In one town, 20 percent of the adults in each decade found themselves charged with an offense, usually a morals violation. Magistrates compelled Sabbath attendance and suppressed religious alternatives, to the point of executing dissident Quakers. [Jack Greene](#) has explained that the Puritans used mutual surveillance to . . . suppress individual deviance and sin, exert tight control over the unruly forces of the market, diminish acquisitiveness and the covetousness or frivolous indulgence it engendered, locate every person in an appropriate calling . . . and achieve a degree of communal unity virtually unknown in the fluctuating world of early modern England.

Colonists almost everywhere else in 17th and 18th-century America lived in far more unorganized, disorderly, and diverse places.

Moreover, these Puritan societies did not last long. As the towns grew and connected to the outside world, residents became more divided and less deferential to the elites – a trend that exploded in, for example, the Salem witchcraft trials of the 1690s.

Within a century of their communities’ founding, residents turned to export trade, watered down the standards for church membership, accepted more religious diversity, fought over a variety of issues, increasingly eluded community punishment for their sins, and left town. By the late 1700s, the churches became, as [one scholar](#) shows, open “centers of worship that

could maintain a measure of peacefulness simply because the discontented could leave and join, or form, another group [church] whenever they pleased.”

### Ideological Inheritance

So, the Puritans formed short-lived, authoritarian religious communities that were atypical for their times – hardly the prototype for the America which emerged nor a model for America that most Americans today would want. Yet they did leave us with an important legacy – an ideology of individual choice and social contract.

Much of Puritan theology rested on the idea of covenants, one between God and man and one between man and man. Central to those covenants was the principle of free choice. As the great scholar of Puritanism Perry Miller wrote, “The individual voluntarily promised to obey civil and scriptural law, for the seventeenth-century Puritans believed that meaningful obedience could only grow out of voluntary consent, never out of coercion.” Even birth into the Puritan village did not guarantee full membership; choice did. In the early decades, churches required people to have and to describe a conversion experience before they could join the congregation. The coercive quality of Puritan life ran against their explicit ideology and theology. As the grip of the Puritan elite on townsfolk weakened, the practice of religious freedom expanded and doctrines emphasizing personal belief and individual routes to salvation became even more important.

These developments brought 18th-century Puritans, for better or for worse, closer to the culture of other northern colonists, a culture that stressed individual self-reliance, voluntary association, and resisting authority and hierarchy. But the Puritans brought with them an explicit, religiously-based ideology of choice and contract that justified that American culture. Americans have in the centuries since the first thanksgiving followed more the preaching than the practices of the early Pilgrims and Puritans.



**For more detail, see > <http://madeinamericathebook.wordpress.com/2010/11/22/pilgrims-puritans-americans>**

## 6.2 The Salem Witch Trials in 1692

### Puritan Superstitions

One of the primary contributing factors to the Salem witch trials was the superstitions prevalent in Puritan society. The belief that Satan was present and active was widely held in Europe and eventually spread to Colonial America. A common precept of this belief revolved around the necessity to believe in demons and evil spirits in order to believe in the existence of God and angels. This, combined with daily superstitions where all misfortunes were blamed on the supernatural, created a perfect environment for the mass hysteria leading to the Salem witch trials.

### Village Relationships

Another factor likely contributing to the volume of witchcraft accusations revolved around the relationships within and between the various villages and towns. Numerous disputes occurred in Salem Village around items such as grazing rights, church privileges, and property lines. Many of the neighboring towns viewed Salem Village as problematic as evidenced by decisions such as hiring independent ministers to serve the village instead of supporting the larger Salem Town.

### The Influence of the Church

In Puritan society, life revolved around the church. Most of the colonists in New England immigrated to the colonies due to religious strife in England and disagreement with the Protestant Church of England. Seeking a new home where they could build a society based on common religious beliefs, the Puritan settlers formed somewhat closed societies built around the church and related activities. In the New England Puritan villages and settlements, all aspects of life revolved around the church. Residents were expected to adhere to the teachings of the church, such as attending lengthy sermons twice per week and avoiding activities deemed sinful, such as dancing, non-religious music, and celebrations of events or holidays rooted in Paganism, including traditionally religious holidays such as Christmas and Easter. Even children were affected by the restrictions of the church. Toys such as dolls were forbidden and all education revolved around the Bible and religious doctrine.



#### INFO 6

*The Salem Witch Trials took place between February of 1692 and May of 1693. By the end of the trials, hundreds were accused of witchcraft, nineteen were executed and several more died in prison awaiting either trial or execution. While these events are referred to as the Salem witch trials, several counties in Massachusetts were involved, including Salem Village, Ipswich, Salem Town and Andover. While these were not the first examples of executions for witchcraft in New England, the volume of accusations and convictions generated one of the most infamous examples of mass hysteria in American history.*



### Evidence of Witchcraft

When it came to proving allegations of witchcraft, several types of evidence were considered during the trials. One type of evidence consisted of spectral evidence which encompassed the testimony of those who claimed to see an apparition or shape of the person afflicting them. While some argued that Satan could afflict anyone, others argued that Satan needed the permission of the person whose shape was assumed. Based on precedence in other

cases, the courts ruled spectral evidence admissible in witchcraft trials.

Effluvia also provided a significant source of evidence in witchcraft trials. The basis of this theory revolved around the concept that a witch would be affected by tests conducted on their victims. One common test was the witch cake, where a cake was produced using specific ingredients including the urine of suspected victims. When the cake was fed to a dog, the person guilty of afflicting someone would cry out in pain, indicating guilt. Another common test based on effluvia was the touch test where a victim in the throes of a witchcraft induced fit would cease suffering when touched by the witch causing the affliction.

Other types of evidence included confessions of those accused and the direct testimony of an accused naming others as guilty of witchcraft. The presence of poppits, ointments or books on palm reading or astrology was also considered evidence of guilt. Finally, physical traits such as a mole or blemish, known as a “witch’s teat,” on the body also factored into decisions of guilt.

### Early Accusations

The combination of superstition, religious doctrine and subjective evidence all combined to produce an environment where accusations of witchcraft were easy to make and prove. In 1692, two young girls living in Salem Village began to experience fits where they screamed, threw things, contorted themselves into unusual physical positions and made strange sounds. They also complained of feeling pinches and pin pricks. Medical examinations found no evidence of physical illness or ailment. Soon after the first two girls showed symptoms, additional young women began showing similar signs.

As more young women exhibited signs of affliction, the first three accusations of witchcraft emerged. Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne, and Tituba were accused of performing witchcraft by those afflicted. Good was a homeless beggar likely accused because of her reputation. Osborne did not adhere to expected religious expectations such as regularly attending church meetings and sermons. Tituba was a slave of differing ethnicity. All three of the accused had significant differences from the rest of the villagers, making them easy targets for accusations.

Beginning March 1, 1692, the three accused were brought before local magistrates and questioned for several days before being jailed. After the initial accusations, additional ones flooded in, including accusations against upstanding church members who spoke out against the original accusations. This led to further worry and upheaval among the citizenry who had

viewed their adherence to religious tenants as protection against evil. Membership and participation in church did not offer protection against accusations of witchcraft. Once the accusations started, they quickly gained momentum. Over the course of a few months, the numbers continued to rise and more examinations began. At this point, accusations led to investigations and incarceration but no trial. It was not until May 27, 1692 when William Phips ordered the establishment of a Special Court charged with prosecution of the cases that further legal activity took place.

### The Trials



On June 2, 1692, the Court of Oyer and Terminer convened in Salem Town to begin hearing the cases of those accused of witchcraft. William Stoughton, Lieutenant Governor, served as Chief Magistrate. Thomas Newton served as the Crown's Attorney charged with prosecuting the cases. Stephen Sewall served as the clerk for the proceedings. Beginning immediately, the court issued indictments and began trial proceedings.

The first case brought before the court was that of Bridget Bishop. She was accused of witchcraft for not living the Puritan lifestyle and wearing appropriate clothing. Bishop was found guilty and executed by hanging on June 10, 1692.

Following Bishop's trial, other proceedings followed quickly. Over the course of five months, 22 additional guilty verdicts were returned. Of the 22, 18 were executed following their trial and conviction. Several more perished in prison either awaiting trial or execution. In October 1692, this court was dismissed by Governor Phips although many of the accused or indicted remained in prison.

In January 1693, the Superior Court of Judicature convened and began hearing the remaining cases. Between January and May of 1693, many were found innocent and released or had charges dropped. Of those found guilty by jury trial, the majority was pardoned and no more executions took place.

The Salem witch trials continue to be a subject of interest in many different ways. Influences affecting the trials are numerous, including the political climate, religious beliefs, and commonly held superstitions. Causes continue to be debated such as mass hysteria or biological explanations. Regardless of the cause of individual accusations, the Salem witch trials serve as an example of the impact of extremism, isolationism, and lapses in due process

## 6.2 The Witch Trials and McCarthyism

There is little symbolism within *The Crucible*, but, in its entirety, the play can be seen as symbolic of the paranoia about communism that pervaded America in the 1950s.



Joseph McCarthy

Sen.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s America was overwhelmed with concerns about the threat of communism growing in Eastern Europe and China. Capitalizing on those concerns, a young Senator named Joseph McCarthy made a public accusation that more than two hundred “card-carrying” communists had infiltrated the United States government. Though eventually his accusations were proven to be untrue, and he was censured by the Senate for unbecoming conduct, his zealous campaigning ushered in one of the most repressive times in 20th-century American politics.

While the House Un-American Activities Committee had been formed in 1938 as an anti-Communist organ, McCarthy’s accusations heightened the political tensions of the times. Known as McCarthyism, the paranoid hunt for infiltrators was notoriously difficult on writers and entertainers, many of whom were labeled communist sympathizers and were unable to continue working. Some had their passports taken away, while others were jailed for refusing to give the names of other communists. The trials, which were well publicized, could often destroy a career with a single unsubstantiated accusation. Among those well-known artists accused of communist sympathies or called before the committee were Dashiell Hammett, , Paul Robeson, Elia Kazan, **Arthur Miller**, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, Charlie Chaplin and Group Theatre members Clifford Odets, Elia Kazan, and Stella Adler. In all, three hundred and twenty artists were blacklisted, and for many of them this meant the end of exceptional and promising careers.

During this time there were few in the press willing to stand up against McCarthy and the anti-Communist machine. By 1954, the fervor had died down and many actors and writers were able to return to work. Though relatively short, these proceedings remain one of the most shameful moments in modern U.S. history.



Several parallels exist between the House Un-American Activities Committee's rooting out of suspected communists during this time and the seventeenth-century witch-hunt that Miller depicts in *The Crucible*, including the narrow-mindedness, excessive zeal, and disregard for the individuals that characterize the government's effort to stamp out a perceived social ill. Further, as with the alleged witches of Salem, suspected Communists were encouraged to confess their crimes and to "name names," identifying others sympathetic to their radical cause. Some have criticized Miller for oversimplifying matters, in that while there were (as far as we know) no actual witches in Salem, there were certainly Communists in 1950s America. However, one can argue that Miller's concern in *The Crucible* is not with whether the accused actually are witches, but rather with the unwillingness of the court officials to believe that they are not. In light of McCarthyist excesses, which wronged many innocents, this parallel was felt strongly in Miller's own time.



**Arthur Miller testified at the McCarthy-Era House of Representatives Un-American Activities Committee in 1956 but refused to name friends who may have been Communists**