

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**

**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**

**Kasdi Merbah Ouargla University**

**Faculty of Letters and Languages**

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Master's Degree in the field of  
English Language and Literature

Major: Literature and Civilisation

# **Hysteria in Salem**

## **Historical and Psychoanalytic Approaches to "The Crucible"**

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ACADEMIC YEAR: 2022/2023



## **Dedication 1**

I dedicate my thesis work to my dear family, my lovely mother, my dear father and all my brothers'. Without whom I certainly have ever been able to achieve it.

Benguega Abir

## **Dedication 2**

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, who have always been my pillars of support and inspiration. Their unwavering love and guidance have been my driving force throughout my journey, to my source of inspiration my sister and to my dear brothers.

To my partner in this work pleasure to work with you and sharing this beautiful journey together.

Amira Lina



## **Acknowledgements**

We would want to express our gratitude to our respectable supervisor Mr. CHEIKH Abderrahim, for his incredibly helpful assistance, direction, and advice.

Special thanks go out to the jury members for their invaluable constructive critique of the work, which will unquestionably serve as a springboard and an invaluable resource for our future research. We also want to express our gratitude to the entire English Language Department.



## Abstract

American historians have long studied and discussed the Salem witch trials, which are frequently referred to as the scariest chapter in New England history. In order to better comprehend what motivates people, Researchers have looked into everything from the psychological state of the affected to the economic and social issues affecting the Salem community in order to understand the factors underlying the events of 1692. Others have written to explain the Puritans' misconceptions while others have written the hysteria of what happened in Salem Massachusetts Bay colony. The Salem witch trials of 1692, in which nearly twenty people were executed on charges of witchcraft, and the events that transpired during the Salem witch trials of 1692–93 are the two most significant witch-hunts to have occurred on American soil, and "*The Crucible*" is the most accurate representation of both. 1950s McCarthyism, which stands for the persecution of those thought to be Communist Party members. In an honorable way, Arthur Miller used the events of the seventeenth century in a brilliant work that analyzed the events of the 1950s. This

thesis seeks to examine both historical occurrences and explore connections between Arthur Miller's "*The Crucible*" and those events. Additionally, a comparison of the novel with Salem's actual history.

**Keywords:** psychology, puritans, Salem witch trials, the crucible, McCarthyism, Arthur Miller, hysteria, Massachusetts

## الملخص

لطالما درس المؤرخون الأمريكيون وناقشوا محاكمات ساحرات سالم ، والتي يشار إليها كثيرًا بالفصل الأكثر رعبا في تاريخ نيو إنجلاند. من أجل فهم أفضل لما يحفز الناس ، نظر الباحثون في كل شيء من الحالة النفسية للمتضررين إلى القضايا الاقتصادية والاجتماعية التي تؤثر على مجتمع سالم من أجل فهم العوامل الكامنة وراء أحداث 1692. وكتب آخرون لشرح البيوريتان . "المفاهيم الخاطئة بينما كتب آخرون هستيريا ما حدث في مستعمرة خليج سالم ماساتشوستس تعد محاكمات ساحرات سالم لعام 1692 ، والتي تم فيها إعدام ما يقرب من عشرين شخصًا بتهمة السحر ، والأحداث التي وقعت خلال محاكمات الساحرات في سالم بين 1692 و 1693 ، هو " *The Crucible* " من أهم مطاردة الساحرات التي حدثت على الأراضي الأمريكية ، و مكارثية الخمسينيات ، والتي ترمز إلى اضطهاد أولئك الذين يُعتقد أنهم . أدق تمثيل لكليهما أعضاء في الحزب الشيوعي. بطريقة مشرفة ، استخدم آرثر ميللر أحداث القرن السابع عشر

تسعى هذه المذكرة إلى فحص كل من الأحداث . في عمل رائع انتقد أحداث الخمسينيات  
و تلك الأحداث. "the crucible" التاريخية واستكشاف الروابط بين آرثر ميلر

الكلمات المفتاحية : علم النفس ، المتشددون ، محاكمات ساحرة سالم ، البوتقة ، المكارثية ،  
آرثر ميلر ، الهستيريا ، ماساتشوستس

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## General Introduction

Salem witch trials were one of the most controversial events in human history. In the 17th century, a massive hysteria occurred in Salem, Massachusetts Bay colony, causing the death of more than 200 people accused of practicing witchcraft, 20 deaths. Hysteria was shaped in many ways in history, heading to the massive political hysteria that accrued in the 1950s McCarthyism in America.

Arthur Miller, one of the most remarkable playwrights in American literature, released "the crucible" in 1953, based on the Salem witch trials in Massachusetts. This dissertation endeavors to introduce a study in different approaches to the natural history of the events of Salem 1692 and mid 93 and their representation in the play *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller. The play is partially faithful to the episodes accrued in Salem during the winter of 1692, but they summarize the event that occurred that year. Miller introduced a love story between two leading figures to make it more attractive to the audience and readers. Here, we will see how the process of what would subsequently be known by many authors as mass hysteria started. Besides, what Miller tried to do was a representation of the events of the 1950s in America with suspected Communists.

*The Crucible* is a drama that discusses the beginning of the Salem witch trial—Abigail Williams and John Proctor plays the leading role in the love story. John Proctor is a farmer married to Elizabeth Proctor, with whom he had four children. Abigail Williams is the reverend of Samuel Parris of Salem's niece. She came to live with her uncle after the raid in which the Native Americans slaughtered her parents. Abigail, like many young girls in the area, worked as a servant in some family houses, and before Abigail went to live with her uncle, she was working at Proctors' house.

There, Abigail and John Proctor had a love affair, and when Elizabeth Proctor discovered it, she fired Abigail. As this episode infuriated Abigail enormously, she started the accusations of witchcraft against Elizabeth, intending to end Elizabeth and John Proctor's marriage. What she had never imagined was that her plan would go that far. The consequences of her vengeance would end with about twenty executions, and in the end, Abigail escaped Unpunished. In Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*, hysteria is a major theme. The play's central theme is hysteria, which drives the plot along and compels the reader to consider the characters' decisions and actions—or, more accurately, their lack of decisions and critical analysis. The hysteric events happened in Salem, a conservative Puritan society that believed in the supernatural and the presence of Satan and the Devil. Even the most devoted can be apprehended by the devil's hand. Society devoted their lives to the sake of God. However, the people could not accept the supernatural's that was not explained religiously. They believed witchcraft was a crime that should only be proven through testimony by individuals who claimed to be afflicted.

This resulted in a horrific tragedy in American human history, even led by the big names in the town driven by hysteria; the accusations were made arbitrarily by unconscious minds.

The everyday events of the Salem witch trials and McCarthyism were driven by hysteria. Furthermore, the Anti-communist investigation during the 1950s, known as the "witch hunt," was carried out by Senator Joseph Raymond McCarthy. The events happened during the cold war. Numerous individuals were charged with disloyalty and were believed to be affiliated with the communist party. In the February 50s, McCarthy announced a list of two hundred and five people being

accused of being members of the communist party. McCarthyism started to make unfair accusations and wrong ways of investigation; Arthur Miller was one of the victims of hysteric accusations.

These last 1950s events reflected the Salem trials, as we can see that history is repeating itself repeatedly.

This study aims to outline the historical and psychological effects of the Salem witch trials, which took place in the Massachusetts Bay colony settlement of Salem, and the McCarthyism of the 1950s in Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*. Additionally, it examines how Arthur Miller and the witches' courts change psychologically throughout the play. The results sought here would hence serve to answer the relevant questions:

What is the historical context of the Salem witch trials, and how does it inform our understanding of the events portrayed in *The Crucible*? What is the concept of hysteria, and how is it portrayed in Miller's play? How do the characters in *The Crucible* exhibit symptoms of hysteria, and what does this reveal about their psychological states? How can a psychoanalytic approach help us to understand the motivations and behaviors of the characters in *The Crucible*? This research is vital because it helps readers understand the historical events of the Salem witch trials. Also, they study the play by Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*, the psychology of the writer and the characters in the play, and how they coexist with the events. It defines some of the most complex concepts in psychology, such as hysteria. It analyzes Miller's psychological development through the play "*The Melting Pot*" and conveys to the

reader the author's personal life and the historical context on which the play is based. Also, this study can be a reference for future students studying the same topic.

As a primary source for this study, the play *The Crucible*, as well as any other materials pertinent to the topic of study—a brand-new one for our department as far as we are concerned—will be used to generate information. Research libraries and the internet are the tools utilized to gather data. In order to analyze the information gathered for this thesis, we want to employ historicist and psychological approaches to literature. We will also employ qualitative methodology to accommodate historical and psychological studies.

Three chapters make up this thesis. The study paper's historical framework is presented in the first two chapters. These chapters have a historicist stance, which maintains that literature cannot be fully understood apart from its historical, philosophical, and individual settings. Through historicism, we hope to inform readers about the actual events that sparked hysteria in Salem, Massachusetts, as well as about Arthur Miller's personal life, his literary accomplishments, and the historical background of *The Crucible*, particularly the Salem witch trials of 1692–1693 and McCarthyism in the 1950s. We will analyze the events Miller introduced in *The Crucible* before moving on to the ideas that inspired Miller's writing. Moreover, the actual events that led to the hysteria in Salem.

The psychological technique is used in the third chapter, the practical portion of our thesis, to analyze the characters' behaviors. As a result, we want to analyze in-depth Arthur Miller's character and psychological development in the play *The Crucible*, as well as the personalities of the key figures in the Salem Witch Trials.



## **CHAPTER-I. Background**

## **Introduction**

In this chapter, will introduce and discuss the key terms and definitions of "mass hysteria" in Salem, Massachusetts, and examine its representation in American literature. The portrayal of hysteria in literature has been significantly influenced by modern medical concepts and discoveries, particularly in naturalistic literature. This chapter will also provide an overview of "The Crucible," including the development of events from the beginning and its impact on American literature. Our primary focus will be on Arthur Miller's definition of hysteria as presented in his play, "The Crucible" (1953). This will serve as an introduction to the topic and help readers understand the actual historical events that occurred in Salem.

### **I.1. Definition of key terms**

#### **I.1.1. Definition of hysteria**

Hysteria is a medical condition characterized by emotional excesses, irrationality, and physical symptoms such as paralysis, tremors, and convulsions. The term was initially used to describe a condition thought only to affect women and was thought to be caused by a dysfunctional uterus. However, some people have raised doubts about this perspective. The term is no longer used in the medical field. In modern psychology, hysteria is considered a historical concept and no longer a disease. Hysteria, according to Merriam-Webster;

"A psychoneurosis marked by emotional excitability and disturbances of psychogenic, sensory, vasomotor, and visceral functions. Behavior exhibiting overwhelming or unmanageable fear or emotional excess" ("hysteria")



### **1.1.1.2. Sigmund Freud and Hysteria**

According to Sigmund Freud, "Hysteria is a process that can be considered as a product of the conversion of psychic energy into somatic energy" (Freud 165). This implies that emotional or psychological conflicts can manifest physically in the body, leading to symptoms such as paralysis, tremors, and convulsions. In his psychoanalytic theory, Freud considered hysteria a neurosis caused by repressed emotions and unresolved conflicts. In addition, hysteria was caused by unconscious conflicts, often related to repressed sexual desires or traumas from childhood; Freud believed that the treatment of hysteria involved bringing these unconscious conflicts to consciousness through talk therapy and helping the patient to resolve them.

### **1.1.1.3. Charcot and Hysteria**

Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893) was a French neurologist known for his pioneering work in studying hysteria. Charcot described hysteria as a mental disorder manifested by physical symptoms such as paralysis, seizures, and sensory disturbances, without an underlying organic cause.

According to Charcot, hysteria is primarily a female disorder caused by a tendency to be psychologically unstable, often due to traumatic experiences such as sexual abuse or emotional distress. He believed the disorder was related to nervous system dysfunction and was a form of dissociation in which the patient's mind was separated from the body. Charcot's approach to treating hysteria is based on his belief that it is an illness and that sufferers should be treated with empathy and understanding. He uses hypnosis and counseling to help his patients overcome their

symptoms and regain control of their lives. Charcot's research on hysteria was far-reaching and helped shape the fields of neurology and psychology.

#### **1.1.1.4. Arthur Miller and Hysteria**

Miller defines hysteria as a phenomenon that can tear apart communities and supersede logic. Puritan culture values hard work, a strong community, and strong religious beliefs and discourages privacy and entertainment, such as theater or reading. However, these values and practices create a repressive environment where people cannot vent their resentment. *The Crucible* shows how the likes of Abigail, Reverend Parris, and Thomas Putnam used the frenzy of mass hysteria to their advantage. For example, Abigail accused Elizabeth Proctor of using witchcraft to gain power and took John Proctor for herself. This shows how Puritan culture and its rigid values eventually led to the emergence and increase of mass hysteria (Miller, 1953).

#### **1.1.1.5. Hysteria in Literature**

Hysteria has always been interpreted as a feminine illness, dating back to the Renaissance. The Renaissance era developed the gendered binary oppositions of sadness (a masculine emotion) and hysteria (a feminine emotion), which laid the foundation for later gendered definitions of hysteria. The dual character of hysteria is discussed in G.S. Rousseau's article "A Strange Pathology: Hysteria in the Early Modern World, 1500-1800.":

"For men, a cycle was thus set up of erotic infatuation, unrequited love, love sickness, anger, and melancholy. Hysteria was preempted: nowhere did the

sexual organs enter the sequence, nor was there space for priapic phalluses or morbidly wandering scrotums."

### **1.1.2.Witchcraft**

Witchcraft is a complex and diverse practice found in many cultures throughout history. It is often associated with using supernatural or magical powers to control people or events. This control can be achieved through various means, such as using spells, incantations, charms, or ritual ceremonies. Witchcraft has often been viewed as sorcery or magic used for both beneficial and malevolent purposes. Some practitioners of witchcraft may use it for spiritual or religious purposes, such as connecting with deities or spirits, performing healing rituals, or seeking personal growth and enlightenment. However, witchcraft has also been used to harm others, such as casting curses or hexes, causing illness or death, or manipulating people for personal gain. Because of this negative association, many societies have viewed witchcraft with fear and suspicion, leading to persecuting those accused of practicing it. The history of witchcraft is complex and varied. While it has been practiced in many cultures, it has been particularly associated with European witch hunts of the 14th to 18th centuries. During this time, thousands of people, primarily women, were accused of witchcraft and executed. Many of these accusations were based on superstitions, misunderstandings, and prejudices rather than evidence of witchcraft.

Today, witchcraft continues to be practiced in various forms, from traditional beliefs and practices to modern Wicca and other neo-pagan religions. While controversial and often misunderstood, it is recognized as a legitimate religious practice in many countries worldwide.

According to Merriam-Webster, witchcraft is:

"The use sorcery and magic, communicating with the devil and familiar. Irresistible influence or fascination, rituals and practices that incorporate a belief in magic and that are associated especially with neo-pagan traditions and religions (such as Wicca)." (witchcraft)

### **I.1.2.2. Witch hunt**

A witch hunt is a term used to describe a situation in which a person or group of people are accused of wrongdoing, often without evidence or due process, and subjected to intense scrutiny, harassment, or persecution. This term has its roots in the historical persecution of individuals accused of witchcraft, particularly during the early modern period in Europe and colonial America. During these witch-hunts, thousands of people, primarily women, were accused of practicing witchcraft and subjected to harsh treatment, including torture and execution. Many of these accusations were based on superstitions, rumors, and personal grudges rather than evidence of wrongdoing.

Today, witch-hunt is often used to describe situations in which people are unfairly accused of wrongdoing or targeted for their beliefs or affiliations, often without any evidence to support the accusations. This can occur in various contexts, including politics, business, and social media.

Witch hunt, according to Merriam Webster

"A search out for persecution of persons accused of witchcraft. The searching out and deliberate harassment of those (such as political opponents) with unpopular views." (Witch-hunt)

### **I.1.2.3. Witch hunt in the 1950s**

The witch hunts of the 1950s referred to a period known in the United States as the "Red Scare" or "McCarthyism." Senator Joseph McCarthy conducted a campaign to eliminate during that period: so-called communists and communist sympathizers from various industries and government agencies. Many were accused of being communists without evidence or evidence, and the accused were often closely investigated and harassed. The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) was established in 1938 to investigate alleged subversion, but it became especially active in the 1950s. The committee subpoenaed many people to testify about their political beliefs and associations, some of whom were subsequently blocked or imprisoned.

The term "witch hunt" was used to describe the tactics McCarthy and HUAC employed because of the similarities between the allegations made during the Red Scare and those made during historical witch-hunts. Like the alleged witches, those accused of being communists were often found guilty without evidence to support the charges.

### **I.1.3. Fits and hallucinations**

Hallucinations, according to Cleveland Clinique, is

"A hallucination is a false perception of objects or events involving your senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste. Hallucinations seem real, but they are not. Chemical reactions and abnormalities in your brain cause hallucinations." (Cleveland Clinique)

Tituba, Parris's daughter Betty and his niece Abigail Williams experienced the hallucinations and their friend Ann Putnam when they began indulging in fortune tells. Betty and Abigail started strange behaviors, including sitting and contorting their bodies, making odd sounds screaming, throwing things, and complaining of biting and pinching sensations.

Many modern theories suggest that a strange behavior that the girls surfing from loneliness, child abuse, mental illness, epilepsy (a common condition that affects the brain and causes frequent seizures), or even diseases caused by eating rye infected with fungus. Which can elicit vomiting, choking, fits, hallucinations, and a sense of something crawling on the skin. The local town doctor, William Griggs, blamed the supernatural. Neighbors guessed that the "witch cake" made by Tituba caused their illness. The girls, in the end, blamed the three women, including Tituba, the enslaved person.

## **1.2. Overview of the CRUCIBLE**

*"The Crucible"* is a play by Arthur Miller that was first performed in 1953. The story takes place in Salem, Massachusetts, in the year 1692. Witch trials, the play tells the story of a community torn apart by fear, paranoia, and superstition.

The play opens with a group of young girls being caught dancing in the woods, and rumors of witchcraft soon begin to spread through the town. As hysteria and accusations of witchcraft grow, the town is thrown into chaos, with innocent people being accused and executed. At the play's heart is John Proctor, a farmer embroiled in the witch trials when his former lover, Abigail Williams, accuses his

wife, Elizabeth Proctor, of witchcraft. Proctor struggles with guilt and shame as he is revealed to have committed adultery with Abigail.

Throughout the play, Miller explores themes of morality, integrity, and the dangers of mass hysteria and the abuse of power. He uses the events of the witch trials to comment on contemporary political issues, particularly the McCarthyism era of the 1950s, during which suspected Communists were investigated and persecuted in the United States.

*"The Crucible"* remains a powerful and enduring work and is often studied in schools and universities as a classic example of American drama.

### **1.3. The Crucible**

#### **1.3.1. Plot summary**

In the Puritan town of Salem, New England, Massachusetts, a group of girls dances in the woods with an enslaved black man named Tituba. They are caught dancing by the local priest, Reverend Parris. One of the girls, Parris' daughter Betty, fell into a coma. Rumors of witchcraft abound in the town, and crowds gather at Parris' home. After sending in witchcraft expert Reverend Parris, Parris asks the girls' leader, Abigail Williams, about what happened in the forest.

Abigail, Parris's niece, and ward, admits to doing nothing beyond "dancing."

To escape punishment, they claimed to be possessed by witches and accused various community members of witchcraft. The allegations quickly spiraled out of control, and the city was filled with fear and suspicion.

John Proctor was initially reluctant to get involved in a witch-hunt, but his wife was accused, and he had to defend her. He took part in the trial and was eventually accused of witchcraft himself. Despite his efforts to clear his name, he was eventually found guilty and sentenced to death.

The play ends with John refusing to lie about witchcraft to save his life. Instead, he chose to die as a moral and honest man and refused to compromise on his principles. The show powerfully illustrates the dangers of mass hysteria and the importance of upholding justice even in the face of adversity.

### **1.3.2. Commentary and Background**

"I reflect what my heart tells me from the society around me. We live in a time when great uncertainty exists in this country. I am trying to delve to the bottom of this and come up with a positive answer, but I have had to go to hell with the Broadway premiere of *Meet the Devil*. You cannot know the worst until you have seen the worst. It is not for me to make easy answers and come forth before the American people and tell them everything is all right when I look into their eyes. I see them troubled."—Arthur Miller, in his testimony before the U.S. House Un-American Activities Committee."

The *Crucible* is a play deeply rooted in the historical context of the 1692 Salem witch trials, as well as a commentary on the social and political issues of the time. Arthur Miller wrote the show during the McCarthy era when the U.S. government investigated suspected communists and communist sympathizers when fear and distrust reigned in America.



In the play, Miller compares the Salem witch trials to the McCarthy era (witch hunt), implying that both were characterized by hysteria, paranoia, and a willingness to believe allegations without sufficient evidence. Miller was subpoenaed before the House Un-American Activities Committee and accused of being a communist sympathizer. He used that experience to support his portrayal of John Proctor, the show's protagonist, who was accused of witchcraft but refused to make a false statement and confessed to saving his own life.

"The Crucible" is also a commentary on valuing individuality and being aware of the risks associated with conformity. Conscience and Integrity. Miller suggests that the characters most susceptible to the witch hunt are unwilling to stand up for their own beliefs or challenge the prevailing social norms. This message was particularly relevant in the McCarthy era when many people were afraid to speak out against the government's investigations for fear of being accused themselves.

Through "The Crucible," Miller sought to shine a light on how political and social systems can be used to suppress dissent and control individuals. He also emphasized the importance of standing up for what is right, despite adversity and persecution.

### **1.3.3. Allegory in the Crucible**

Allegory is a literary device that uses symbolic representations of abstract ideas, concepts, or moral values through characters, actions, and events in a narrative. It is a form of extended metaphor in which an entire story or poem has hidden or potential meanings beyond literal interpretation. In an allegory, characters and events are not to be taken literally but as manifestations of ideas or values.

The play is widely considered an allegory for the McCarthy era of the 1950s in the United States. Since it parallels the historical events of Salem 1692, the character of John Proctor can also be seen as an allegory for the individual's struggle to maintain integrity and personal dignity in the face of unjust persecution. Proctor is a respected farmer in Salem who is accused of witchcraft but refuses to confess to a crime he did not commit, even though it means his own execution.

The play also explores the themes of power, authority, and the abuse of power. The character of Abigail Williams, who is responsible for starting the accusations of witchcraft, can be seen as an allegory for the corrupting influence of power and the dangers of unchecked ambition.

#### **I.3.4. Setting**

The play is set in Massachusetts. Salem was a Puritan settlement known for its strict religious beliefs and its adherence to the rule of law. At the time, the colony was still a relatively new settlement undergoing social and economic changes. The play is set in several locations in Salem, including the Reverend Parris's house, the meeting house, the Proctor farmhouse, and the courtroom. These settings provide the backdrop for the various events in the play, from the initial accusations of witchcraft to the trials and eventual executions. The setting of *The Crucible* is vital to the play's themes and to its overall impact. The Puritan society of Salem is portrayed as rigid and repressive, where individuality and independent thinking are discouraged.

### **1.3.5. Characters**

**John Proctor:** A farmer accused of witchcraft and becomes one of the central figures in the play's drama. Proctor is a complex character who struggles with guilt and moral dilemmas throughout the play.

**Abigail Williams:** The niece of Reverend Parris and the main instigator of the witchcraft accusations. Abigail is a manipulative and ambitious young woman who uses accusations to gain power and control over others.

**Reverend Parris:** The minister of Salem and a central figure in the community. Parris is depicted as a weak and paranoid man who is more concerned with his reputation than his congregation's well-being.

**Elizabeth Proctor:** John Proctor's wife, who is also accused of witchcraft. Elizabeth is a solid and moral character who struggles to maintain her integrity in the face of false accusations.

**Judge Danforth:** The presiding judge of the witchcraft trials. Danforth is a stern and inflexible man who believes in the court's authority above all else.

**Reverend Hale:** A minister who comes to Salem to investigate the witchcraft accusations. Hale is a complex character that initially believes in the reality of witchcraft but comes to doubt the validity of the accusations.

**Mary Warren:** A servant in the Proctor household who initially participates in the witchcraft accusations but later recants. Mary is a weak character who struggles to assert herself in the face of authority.

**Giles Corey:** A farmer accused of witchcraft and eventually pressed to death. Corey is a stubborn and principled character who refuses to cooperate with the court.

**Thomas Putnam:** is a wealthy landowner who exploits the witchcraft accusations to settle personal vendettas and acquire more land. Putnam is a greedy and ruthless character who cares only for his interests.

**Tituba:** An enslaved person from Barbados who is the first to be accused of witchcraft. Tituba is a mysterious and enigmatic character caught up in the hysteria of the witchcraft trials.

## **Conclusion**

Finally, the chapter provides a detailed analysis of the concept of "mass hysteria" and its representation in American literature, with a special focus on Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*. By examining the historical events of the Salem witch trials and modern medical understanding of hysteria, this chapter illuminates how these factors shaped literature. An overview of "The Crucible" also helps to contextualize the show's depiction of hysteria and its impact on American literature. Through this study, readers can gain a deeper understanding of the cultural and historical context of mass hysteria and its manifestations in literature. Finally, the chapter emphasizes the importance of analyzing literary works in their cultural and historical contexts in order to more fully understand their themes and messages.



## **CHAPTER-II. Historical Context**

## **Introduction**

This chapter examines the events that led to the infamous Salem Witch Trials in the late 17th century, fuelled by mass panic and accusations of witchcraft. The chapter provides background information on the Puritan community in Salem and explores religious, social, and political factors that contributed to the panic and fear that gripped the town. It also discusses the aftermath of the trials and the various theories to explain the events of 1692. Ultimately, the chapter offers insight into the enduring legacy of the Salem Witch Trials, including the red scare and McCarthyism, and what they can teach us about the dangers of mass frenzy and the importance of critical thinking.

### **II.1. The Origin of puritan beliefs in witchcraft**

Puritan interpretations of the Bible and their perceptions of the spiritual realm are the roots of their beliefs in witchcraft. According to Robinson (2002), Puritans thought that the devil was a genuine, strong entity in the universe who worked nonstop to corrupt and enticed people. They also thought that witches had a deal with the devil and were endowed with supernatural abilities to carry out their will.

Several high-profile witch trials in England in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, which were widely covered by the press and contributed to the paranoia and dread of witches in the nation, served to further this conviction of the actuality of witchcraft. The Puritans carried these ideas on their early 17th-century voyage to the New World, where they aggressively started the witch hunt in various localities.

The Puritans' theological convictions were complemented by a strong feeling of community and a determination to uphold order and control in their society.

Witchcraft was considered a threat to this order because it was perceived as a way for people to rebel against God and wreak havoc and destruction on their neighbors. As a result, the Puritans were ready to bring charges against anybody thought to be a witch, frequently doing so using thin evidence and forced confessions.

Overall, religious convictions, societal influences, and historical occurrences all had a role in the widespread dread and paranoia about witches in early modern Europe and the development of Puritan beliefs in witchcraft.

## **II.2. Overview of Salem Witch Trials**

The Salem Witch Trials took place in colonial Massachusetts and involved hearings and prosecutions of individuals who were accused of witchcraft. 1692 and 1693. The trials resulted in the execution of 20 people, most women, and the imprisonment of over 150 others.

The events leading up to the Salem Witch Trials began in January of 1692 when a group of young girls in the town of Salem Village began experiencing fits and convulsions. They accused three women of practicing witchcraft and causing their afflictions. The accused women were brought before the local magistrates, who conducted hearings and ordered their arrest.

As news of the accusations and arrests spread, more and more people in Salem and surrounding towns were accused of witchcraft. The accusations were often based on hearsay and superstition and were fuelled by religious and social tensions in the community.

The trials themselves were conducted in a highly irregular manner. The accused were denied legal counsel and were often subjected to coercive interrogation

methods, including physical torture. Many of the accused confessed to witchcraft under duress, and some even implicated others in order to save themselves.

The trials finally came to an end in May of 1693 when the governor of Massachusetts, William Phips, dissolved the Court of Oyer and Terminer, which had been responsible for the trials. In the aftermath of the trials, the accused and their families faced social ostracism and economic ruin, and the community of Salem was left deeply scarred.

As historian Mary Beth Norton writes, "The Salem witch trials are one of the most striking examples in American history of the dangers of groupthink, prejudice, and intolerance, and of the critical importance of preserving individual rights and due process of law" (Norton 45).

### **II.3. Timeline of Salem Witch Trials**

**Nov.1689:** reverend Samuel Parris and his family move from Boston into the Salem village parsonage. The family includes his wife, Elizabeth, his daughter Betty (9), his niece Abigail Williams (11), and two enslaved West Indians, John and Tituba Indian.

**Jan.1692:** Betty Parris (9), Abigail Williams in Salem village, 11-year-old Abigail Williams and 12-year-old Ann Putnam Jr are exhibiting strange behavior.

**Feb.1692:** Tituba, Sarah Good, and Sarah Osborne are arrested as witches.

**May.1692:** the court of Oyer and Terminer was established by Governor Phips to hear witchcraft cases. The court consisted of nine judges: Lt. Governor William Stoughton, Nathaniel Saltonstall, Wait-Still Winthrop, Peter Sergeant, John Richard, Samuel Sewall, Bartholomew Gedney, John Hathorne, and Jonathan Corwin. In



June, Saltonstall resigned over the issue of spectral evidence: he was later accused of being a witch.

**June.1692:** Bridget Bishop was tried, convicted, and hanged. Rev. Cotton Mather and other ministers question the use of spectral evidence.

**Jury.1692:** Rebecca Nurse, Susannah Martin, Sarah Wildes, Sarah Good, and Elizabeth How hanged.

**August.1692:** George Jacobs, Martha Carrier, Rev. George Burroughs, John Proctor, and John Willard were hanged.

**September.1692:** Giles Corey was pressed to death for refusing to answer in court to charges of witchcraft. Mary Easty, Alice Parker, Ann Pudeator, Margaret Scott, Wilmott Redd, Samuel Wardwell, and Mary Parker were hanged.

**October.1692:** Rev. Increase Mather spoke spectral evidence. Governor Phips dissolved the Court of Oyer and Terminer. Some prisoners were released on bail if they paid for their confinement, food, and the shackles they wore.

**January.1693:** Witch trials began again. Some guilty verdicts were reached, but Governor Phips did not allow judges to hang convicted witches.

**January.1697:** By order of the General Court of Massachusetts, there was a day of fasting and prayer for all the calamities that had befallen the colony. Judge Stoughton signed the proclamation but would not allow references to the witch trials as part of its wording. Judge Samuel Sewall publicly admitted his "guilt" for his part in the witchcraft trials by having a statement read at the South Church in Boston. Twelve

men who had been jurors during the witch trials asked pardon of God, of "the living sufferers," and of "all whom we have justly offended" in Salem.

**1697:** Rev. Joseph Green became minister at the church of Salem Village, which started the healing process in this fractured community.

## **II.4. The causes that led to Salem witch trials**

### **II.4.1. Religious factors**

Religion played a significant role in this event, and several religious factors influenced the frenzy. Here are some of the critical religious factors that contributed to the Salem panic:

Puritanism was a key factor in the Salem panic. Furthermore, it means The Puritans who came to Massachusetts held to a rigid interpretation of the Bible and put a high value on one's moral character and God's omnipotence. They thought witchcraft was one of the Devil's instruments and the Devil was a genuine living force in the universe. The Puritans also held the view that it was the duty of society to uphold morality and punish sinners, which increased their level of vigilance and mistrust toward any perceived danger to their religious group. As historian Richard Godbeer notes, "Puritans believed in the doctrine of predestination, which held that God had already determined who would be saved and who would be damned" (Godbeer 42)

This belief created a sense of anxiety and fear among the Puritans, as they believed that their actions on earth would directly impact their eternal fate. As historian Stacy Schiff writes, "The Puritans lived in a state of perpetual unease, conscious of their unworthiness and constantly searching for signs of God's grace" (Schiff 59).

This sense of unease and striving for God's grace helped to fuel the hysteria in Salem as people looking for signs of the Devil's influence in their community.

Furthermore, the Puritans' strict religious culture contributed to the Salem hysteria. Historian Mary Beth Norton notes, "The Puritans believed that the Devil was a real and dangerous presence in the world, and they were constantly on guard against his influence" (Norton 47).

This fear of the Devil and his power to possess and control human beings helped to create an environment where accusations of witchcraft were taken seriously and acted upon. Norton writes, "The Puritans believed that witchcraft was a real and dangerous practice, and they were quick to accuse and punish those they believed were involved in it" (Norton 48).

Puritanism played a significant role in the Salem hysteria. The Puritans' belief in predestination, fear of the Devil, and strict religious culture all contributed to the anxiety and fear that fuelled the accusations of witchcraft in Salem.

In addition, one of the key religious factors was the belief in the Devil and his power to possess individuals. As historian Chadwick Hansen notes, "The concept of demonic possession was a central belief in Puritan theology" (Hansen. 23).

Puritans believed that the Devil constantly sought to tempt and corrupt them and that he could enter into their bodies and control their actions.

This belief in possession was evident in the behavior of the accused. Many exhibited unusual physical symptoms, such as convulsions and fits, interpreted as signs of demonic possession. As historian Mary Beth Norton explains, "The symptoms of the

afflicted persons were interpreted in the context of a culture that believed in the power of the devil to take possession of human beings" (Norton. 54).

In addition to the belief in possession, the Puritan emphasis on personal salvation and the fear of damnation also played a role in the witch trials. The accused were often portrayed as having made a pact with the Devil, which was seen as a grave sin threatening the entire community's salvation. As historian Richard Godbeer notes, "The witch trials revealed the depth of the Puritan fear of damnation and the lengths to which they were willing to go to ensure their salvation" (Godbeer. 102).

Another religious factor is witchcraft; in the context of Puritan society, witchcraft was considered to be a genuine and serious threat. As the New England Historical Society stated, "The Puritans believed that witchcraft was a real and dangerous practice. They believed that witches made pacts with the Devil and used their powers to harm others" (New England Historical Society). This belief was rooted in the Bible, which condemns witchcraft as a sin and warns against its practice.

The fear of witchcraft was especially pronounced in Salem, where rumors of witchcraft were rampant. According to the Salem Witch Museum, "In Salem, rumors circulated that witches were living among the community, and people became paranoid and fearful" (Salem Witch Museum).

This fear ultimately led to the infamous Salem Witch Trials, during which many innocent people were accused and convicted of witchcraft.

In summary, the Puritans believed in the reality and danger of witchcraft, which was based on their religious beliefs and convictions. The fear of witchcraft was especially strong in Salem, leading to tragic consequences.

The role of the Puritan Church in the Salem hysteria is widely acknowledged. According to historian Richard Trask, "Church leaders were often deeply involved in the trials and were seen as authorities on matters of witchcraft and demonic possession" (Trask. 55).

There are several indications of this. Of the key figures in the trials, including Cotton Mather, were prominent Puritan ministers.

The Church's influence on the community cannot be overstated. As Trask notes, "Its teachings and beliefs helped to fuel the hysteria" (Trask. 56).

Puritanism emphasized the reality of the Devil and the dangers of sin, and this worldview contributed to a belief in the existence of witches and the need to root them out. In this way, the Church's teachings provided a framework for understanding and interpreting the events of the Salem witch trials.

The last religious factor is about "confession and Redemption" The Puritans believed in the power of confession and redemption. They believed that a person who confessed their sins and repented could be saved from eternal damnation. This belief led to a frenzy of confessions during the Salem trials, as people sought to save themselves from the accusations of witchcraft. According to the book "The Salem Witch Trials: A Day-by-Day Chronicle of a Community Under Siege" by Marilynne K. Roach, the belief in the power of confession and redemption played a significant role in the Salem Witch Trials. Roach writes, "The Puritans believed that confession

and redemption were necessary for salvation, and this belief fuelled the frenzy of confessions during the Salem trials, as people sought to save themselves from the accusations of witchcraft" (Roach 27).

In conclusion, religion played a significant role in the Salem hysteria. The Puritan culture, belief in the Devil, fear of witchcraft, influence of the Church, and belief in confession and redemption all contributed to the events of 1692.

#### **II.4.2. Social and political factors**

The Salem witch trials were a complex event, and the causes and factors that contributed to them are still debated among historians. However, it is generally agreed that there were several social and political factors that influenced the hysteria that took hold in Salem.

A key factor was Salem's Puritan culture at the time, which emphasized strong religious beliefs and a strong sense of community. According to historian Richard Godbeer:

"The Puritan culture of Salem reinforced the idea that community welfare depended on maintaining a pure and godly society" (Godbeer. 23).

The use of the phrase "Puritan culture" suggests that a specific set of beliefs and values characterized Salem's society at that time. The statement also implies that the Puritan culture in Salem had a strong sense of community, with the welfare of the community being prioritized over individual interests. This suggests that maintaining a pure and godly society was seen as essential for the well-being of the community.

Another factor is Salem's political climate, which is characterized by division and tension within the community. The city is divided into different factions, each with interests and agendas. As historian Mary Beth Norton notes, "Salem was a town divided, with different groups competing for power and influence." (Norton. 45).

This quote suggests that divisions within the Salem community may have been a factor in the infamous witch trials of 1692. Competition for power and influence between different groups may have created an atmosphere of mistrust and mistrust, which may have led to allegations of witchcraft and subsequent trials.

### **II.4.3. Economic factors**

Economic factors also played a role that contributed to the hysteria in Salem, and we start with "Economic Inequality," which was a significant issue during the colonial period. According to historical records, "There were significant economic disparities between the wealthy and the poor in Salem" (Smith 45).

Affluent landowners and people in business controlled a large portion of the town's wealth and influence, while the struggling farmers and laborers had to make ends meet. There may have been tension and discontent among the lower classes due to this economic imbalance, which resulted in a desire for social and economic reform.

In addition, one of the important economic factors is "land disputes" Land ownership was a major source of power and influence in early Salem. Land ownership and boundary conflicts frequently descended into hostility and violence. According to historian Richard Godbeer:

"Conflicts over property and boundary lines had been a longstanding source of friction among the villagers of Salem" (Godbeer. 10).

These disputes often pitted wealthy landowners against poorer farmers and laborers. The wealthy landowners had the resources to hire lawyers and use the court system to their advantage, while poorer farmers often resorted to more violent means to protect their land. In some cases, accusations of witchcraft were used to discredit a rival landowner or gain an advantage in a land dispute.

"Trade" was one of the economic factors that played a role in the hysteria in Salem. Salem's local economy, which was largely dependent on agricultural and maritime trade, was experiencing a decrease at the time, indicative of the city's economic predicament. Social tensions arose due to the economic crisis between the wealthy merchant class and the struggling rural families. The rigid Puritan social structure that was in place in Salem at the time exacerbated these tensions by reinforcing the idea that the wealthy and powerful were more deserving of respect and authority. According to historian Mary Beth Norton:

"Economic issues played an important role in Salem's witchcraft outbreak. Salem's economic structure was changing rapidly. By the 1690s, its maritime trade declined, and Salem had shifted toward agriculture. As a result, many farmers were left without sufficient land to support their families" (Norton. 15).

The fact that many of the agricultural families were in debt to the affluent merchants in the region added to the sense of anxiety and competitiveness brought on by this economic upheaval.



Also, due to the strong Puritan social structure, women from lower social groups perceived as a danger to the power structure were frequently the targets of allegations of witchcraft. As historian Carol F. Karlsen explains, "Puritan society was hierarchical and patriarchal, and women occupied a subordinate position in this society. Accusations of witchcraft were frequently aimed at women who challenged patriarchal authority or threatened the established order somehow" (Karlsen. 36).

We can say that the economic factors of declining trade and social tensions, the strict Puritan social hierarchy, and the patriarchal nature of society created a climate of fear and suspicion that fuelled the witchcraft hysteria in Salem.

Overall, while there were many complex social, cultural, political, and religious factors that contributed to the Salem witch trials, economic factors such as inequality, land disputes, and trade likely played a role as well

## **II.5. The consequences of the Salem Witch Trials**

### **II.5.1. Accusation and the courts**

In 1692, more than 200 people were accused of being witches during the Salem Witch Trials. Twenty of them were put to death, the most by hanging. This was the only state-authorized execution in which a man was crushed to death under large stones. Several prisoners were tortured, many endured appalling conditions while they waited months for their cases to be heard in court, and at least one died in custody before the panic subsided in 1693.

The accusations began in February of 1692 when several young girls in Salem Village, including Betty Parris and Abigail Williams, exhibited strange behavior. They convulsed, screamed, and claimed to see apparitions. A doctor was

called to examine them, but he could not identify a medical cause for their symptoms. Soon, other girls in the village began to exhibit similar behavior, and the girls claimed that the spirits were the ghosts of local women who had been accused of witchcraft.

The accusations quickly spread, and dozens of people were accused of practicing witchcraft. Many of the accused were women, including several who were social outcasts or who had a history of conflict with their accusers. The trials were conducted in a highly unusual manner, with the accused being forced to defend themselves against often baseless accusations and rumors. Many were imprisoned in harsh conditions and subjected to interrogation and torture.

The Court of "Oyer and Terminer" was established by the colony specifically for the witchcraft trials. In those days, there was no such thing as "innocent until proven guilty"; instead, if you made it to trial, the law assumed you were guilty. If the colony put you there, you had to pay to stay in jail. Bridget Bishop was the first to be executed on Gallows Hill in Salem exactly two weeks later, on June 10. Three types of evidence were used by courts: a confession, the testimony of two eyewitnesses to witchcraft, or spectral proof (when the afflicted girls were having their fits, they would interact with an unseen assailant – the apparition of the witch tormenting them). Wendel Craker claims that no court has ever found someone guilty of witchcraft based just on spectral evidence; additional types of proof are required to support the witchcraft accusation.

For instance, courts permitted "causal connection" evidence to show that the accused had possession or authority over an ill girl. Evidence of witchcraft may also

include prior disputes, poor behavior on the part of the accused, the presence of spell-related items, unusual strength, and the witch's markings. If the defendant was a woman, a jury of women looked for "witch's markings" on her body, which purportedly indicated that a familiar had bitten or fed on the defendant. Moreover, there was the "touching test" (affected girls tortured by fits became calm after touching the accused). Courts could not rely on confessions gained by torture unless the accused later reconfirmed the confession; nevertheless, if the accused did so, officials would often subject the suspect to more torture to get a new confession. (If you recited the Lord's Prayer, you were not a witch. The colony did not burn witches; it hanged them.)

The Salem Witch Trials divided the community. A neighbor testified against the neighbor's Children against parents. Husband against wife. Children died in prisons. Families were destroyed. Churches removed from their congregations some of the persons accused of witchcraft. After the Court of Oyer and Terminer was dissolved, the Superior Court of Judicature took over the witchcraft cases. They disallowed spectral evidence. Most accusations of witchcraft then resulted in acquittals. An essay, "Cases of Conscience," by Increase Mather, a prominent minister, may have helped stop the witch trials craze in Salem.

In October, Increase Mather, then president of Harvard, denounced the use of spectral evidence: "It was better that ten suspected witches should escape than one innocent person is condemned," he said. Not long after, Governor Phips dissolved the Court of Oyer and Terminer.

In January 1693, the newly created Superior Court of Judicature began hearing the remaining witch trials. The judges could not accept spectral evidence, and most of the remaining trials ended in acquittal. Phips pardoned the rest.

### **II.5.2. The impact of the community and society at large**

The consequences of this hysteria had a profound impact on the community and society at large. First off, the charges and trials upended Salem's social structure. Several influential community members, including ministers and wealthy landowners, were detained and imprisoned as a result of the trials, which created turmoil and instability. As historian Mary Beth Norton notes, "The trials upset the social hierarchy by placing ordinary individuals in positions of power and control, while prominent members of the community found themselves facing accusations of witchcraft" (Norton, 2003).

Second, the panic fostered great mistrust and terror across the colony. Many started accusing their relatives and even neighbors of committing witchcraft, which led to an atmosphere of mistrust and anxiety. According to historian Richard Trask, "the accusations of witchcraft created a climate of fear and suspicion, causing many people to turn on each other in a desperate attempt to protect themselves from being accused" (Trask, 2011).

According to the assertion above, the allegations of witchcraft fostered an atmosphere of fear and mistrust, which caused people to turn against one another to avoid being accused. This suggests that the culture at the time was extremely tumultuous and paranoid, with individuals searching for any indication of witchcraft and blaming those, they suspected to defend themselves.

Thirdly, the Massachusetts judicial system was significantly impacted by the trials. Prior to the trials, suspected individuals were deemed innocent until proven guilty. Nonetheless, the onus of proof was placed on the accused during the trials, and many people were found guilty despite having scant to no evidence. As historian Bernard Rosenthal notes, "The trials were a fundamental challenge to the basic principles of the legal system, with the rights of the accused being ignored in favor of hysteria and mob rule" (Rosenthal, 1997).

The remark suggests that the trials were not processed and were carried out fairly and impartially. Rather were motivated by the public's emotional reactions. Fundamental legal concepts, including the right to a fair trial and the presumption of innocence, were not honored, and the accused did not have a fair trial.

In conclusion, the ramifications of the Salem panic were felt throughout the neighborhood and society. A warning should be given regarding the risks of permitting hysteria and paranoia to run uncontrolled due to the breakdown of social order, the atmosphere of dread and suspicion, and the difficulties facing the legal system.

## **II.6. The legacy of the Salem Witch Trials**

The Salem witch trials' excesses led to modifications in American court practices, including the assurance of the right to counsel, the opportunity to cross-examine an accuser, and the presumption of innocence rather than guilt. Due in large part to playwright Arthur Miller's use of the 1692 events and people in *The Crucible* (1953) as allegoric stand-ins for the anti-communist hearings conducted by Sen. Joseph McCarthy during the Red Scare of the 1950s, the Salem trials and the witch

hunt as metaphors for the persecution of minority groups remained potent symbols into the 20th and 21st centuries.

### **II.6.1. McCarthyism and the red scare**

McCarthyism and the Red Scare refer to a period in American history, primarily during the 1950s, marked by intense fear and suspicion of communism and leftist ideologies. The Red Scare was a widespread fear of communist infiltration into American society, while McCarthyism specifically refers to the tactics of Senator Joseph McCarthy, who led a crusade against alleged communist sympathizers in government and other institutions.

During this time, many people were accused of being communists or communist sympathizers, often without evidence, and were subjected to aggressive investigations, public hearings, and even imprisonment or blacklisting. The fear of communism was fuelled by events such as the Soviet Union's acquisition of nuclear weapons and the Korean War, as well as by high-profile cases like the trial and execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg for espionage.

The Red Scare had a profound impact on American politics and society, leading to the rise of anti-communist hysteria and a stifling of dissent and political activism. Many people lost their jobs or had their careers ruined because of being accused of communist sympathies, and the fear of being labeled a communist or "un-American" persisted for years.

Arthur Miller was a prominent American playwright who was deeply affected by the Red Scare and McCarthyism. Miller was a member of the Communist Party briefly in the 1940s, but he left the party and later became a vocal critic of

communism. However, his past association with the party and leftist views made him a target of the McCarthyites.

In 1956, Miller was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) to testify about his political beliefs and associations. Miller refused to name names of other individuals who may have been involved with leftist groups and was subsequently charged with contempt of Congress. He was convicted and sentenced to a fine and a prison term, but the conviction was later overturned on appeal.

Miller's experience with the HUAC and his trial for contempt of Congress inspired him to write his famous play, "The Crucible," which tells the story of the Salem witch trials as an allegory for the Red Scare and McCarthyism. The play explores themes of persecution, hysteria, and the danger of false accusations. It is widely regarded as a commentary on the climate of fear and suspicion that characterized the McCarthy era.

In his essay "Why I Wrote the Crucible," Miller wrote:

"The more I read into the Salem panic, the more it touched off corresponding ages of common experiences in the fifties: the old friend of a blacklisted person crossing the street to avoid being seen talking to him; the overnight conversions of former leftists into born-again patriots; and so on." (Miller 5)

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter has provided a comprehensive analysis of the events leading up to the Salem Witch Trials, their aftermath, and their lasting affect

American society. By examining the historical, social, and political factors that contributed to the mass panic and fear in Salem, readers can gain a deeper understanding of the dangers of mass hysteria and the importance of critical thinking. The chapter highlights the enduring legacy of the Salem Witch Trials, including their relevance to the red scare and McCarthyism, and emphasizes the need to approach events with a critical eye and a willingness to question prevailing beliefs. Overall, this chapter serves as a cautionary tale about the consequences of unchecked fear and mass frenzy, and the importance of upholding the values of reason and rationality in times of crisis.





## **CHAPTER-III. Hysteria in the Crucible**

## **Introduction**

This chapter will study "The Crucible" by Arthur Miller on the psychoanalytic approach to hysteria and explores how this approach can shed light on the behavior of the play's characters, particularly concerning the mass hysteria that grips Salem during the witch trials. Through examining how characters exhibit symptoms of hysteria, such as irrational behavior and physical symptoms, the chapter delves into how the repression of sexual desires and fear of social and moral judgment contribute to the development of hysteria. Using the psychoanalytic approach, Miller offers a more profound knowledge of something vital. Various social and psychological factors can impact a given situation. This led to the witch trials and their devastating consequences.

### **III.1. Psychoanalytic approach**

The theory and practice of psychoanalysis are closely related to the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, who is known to have made significant contributions to psychology. Freud developed this approach in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and has since had a profound impact on the field of psychology and influenced many other forms of therapy. The psychoanalytic approach emphasizes the importance of the unconscious and how it affects human behavior.

According to psychoanalytic theory, repressed or forgotten unconscious thoughts and emotions can still influence a person's behavior and lead to mental health problems. Psychoanalytic therapy is designed to help people gain insight into their unconscious thoughts and feelings to resolve underlying conflicts and achieve more outstanding emotional balance and well-being. Freud developed many key concepts and

techniques associated with psychoanalysis, such as the use of free association, the interpretation of dreams, and the impact of early childhood experiences on personality and behavior. Freud's theories and techniques have been criticized and debated over the years, but his work has had an impact on the field. Psychology is still studied and applied today.

Overall, the psychoanalytic methods and work of Sigmund Freud helped to shape our understanding of human behavior and mental health issues. Her influence is also felt in modern times: psychotherapy and research.

### **III.2. Psychoanalytic in literature**

Psychoanalytic literary criticism is a method of literary analysis that applies psychoanalytic concepts and theories to the interpretation of literary works. This approach typically focuses on the characters' unconscious motivations and desires, and examines how these unconscious impulses influence their actions and shape the overall narrative of the work.

A key concept in psychoanalytic literary criticism is that of the unconscious, which refers to thoughts and feelings that are not fully conscious or consciously cognizant. This idea is often used to explain the behavior and motivations of characters in literature, as psychoanalytic critics look for hidden meanings and unconscious desires that might influence a character's behavior. Another important concept in psychoanalytic literary criticism is that of repression, which refers to the unconscious repression of thoughts and desires considered unacceptable or taboo. Psychoanalytic critics may analyze characters who exhibit repressed desires or struggle to reconcile their conscious beliefs with their unconscious desires. Psychoanalytic literary

criticism also strongly emphasizes symbolism and metaphor, exploring the deeper meanings behind these literary devices in a work of literature. For example, a psychoanalytic critic might analyze water as a symbol in a work of literature, interpreting it as a representation of the unconscious mind or the unknown.

A psychoanalytic approach to literature aims to uncover the unconscious motives and desires that shape literary works and provide a deeper understanding of psychological problems and conflicts. While this approach has been influential in literary studies, it has also been criticized for imposing psychoanalytic theory on literary works and relying on subjective interpretation.

### **III.2. Hysteria in the Crucible**

"*The Crucible*" is a play written in 1953 by Miller; it represents, in a very authentic way, the natural history of afflicted people in Salem during the winter of 1692. We will see how Arthur Miller portrayed the events of 1692, adjusting his work to reality. The play deals with complex and important themes that are still relevant today. It is relevant to point out that, due to space-time restrictions in theatre, Miller saw it necessary to introduce changes in his play. Some characters or events are merged into one. Besides, changes in the age of characters can be appreciated, and the number of afflicted girls was reduced to adapt to the stage restrictions. Besides, only the two most critical judicial figures were included in the adaptation: Hawthorne and Danforth. Moreover, we find the fate of many characters. According to history, something was saved or protected in a very trustworthy way.

The play's central theme is hysteria, which Miller uses to explore the dangers of mass hysteria and the importance of individual conscience. As accusations of

witchcraft mount in Salem, the villagers become engulfed in a frenzy of accusations and counter-accusations. Miller depicts hysteria as a contagious disease that affects the entire village, as people begin to see witches everywhere and turn on each other in a frantic attempt to rescue them. This is demonstrated in Act II when John Proctor, the play's protagonist, confronts Mary Warren, one of the girls who accused his wife of witchcraft, and says, "There are wheels within wheels in this village, and fires within fires!" (Miller 66). This metaphor depicts how hysteria develops and self-perpetuates as people become more fearful and begin to perceive traces of witchcraft everywhere they turn.

Abigail Williams' character is one of the most stunning examples of how individuals in power can use frenzy. Abigail is one of the girls who initially accuse others of witchcraft and starts the chain reaction of accusations. She is presented as a devious and cunning figure who exploits hysteria to obtain power and influence over others. Miller uses Abigail to demonstrate how hysteria may be used to oppress others, as she exploits the charges to settle personal scores and exact revenge on those she dislikes. Act III shows this when Abigail and her friends accuse Mary Warren of being a witch, and Abigail threatens her by saying, "Think you be so mighty that the power of Hell may not turn your wits? Beware of it!" (Miller98). This threatening language highlights how Abigail uses hysteria to intimidate and control others.

Miller uses the character of John Proctor to highlight the importance of individual conscience and the dangers of blindly following the crowd. Proctor is a damaged character who has committed adultery with Abigail and is attempting to reclaim moral authority. He is, however, one of the few characters in the drama that

opposes the development of hysteria and attempts to advocate for truth and justice. Act III shows this when Proctor faces the court and says, "I have known her [Abigail], sir. I have known her. [...] She thinks to dance with me on my wife's grave!" (Miller 102). This language highlights Proctor's willingness to speak out against the hysteria, even at the risk of his own life.

In *The Crucible*, Miller uses historical events to warn about the risks of mass hysteria. He demonstrates how those in positions of authority may use fear and paranoia to control others, and how individuals can become part of a mob mentality, which can have disastrous effects. To prevent being swept up in mass hysteria, the drama emphasizes the significance of critical thinking, individual responsibility, and the need to reject fear and paranoia.

### **III.3. Comparison between the hysteria in 1692 and 1950**

The Salem Witch Trials of 1692 and the Red Scare of the 1950s are two historical events often compared due to their similar patterns of mass hysteria. . Both events were marked by widespread dread and paranoia, which resulted in the persecution of innocent people. Individuals were accused of crimes they did not commit in both cases and were sentenced without due process.

The similarities between the two occurrences led Arthur Miller, the author of *The Crucible*, to write the play. Miller parallels the 1692 witch trials to the 1950s Red Scare, implying that both events were fueled by fear, paranoia, and a desire to maintain power and control over others.

The witch trials in Salem began when a group of young girls claimed to have been bewitched by other members of the community. The accusations spread swiftly,

and more and more people were charged with witchcraft. Trials were held without due process, and individuals accused were frequently executed despite the lack of substantial evidence against them. Similarly, during the Red Scare, people were falsely accused of being communists and had their careers and reputations destroyed.

Fear and paranoia permeated across the town, which was one of the fundamental commonalities between the two occurrences. People in Salem were terrified of the supernatural and the power of witches. People feared the spread of communism and the influence of Soviet agents in the 1950s. These worries were heightened in both cases by propaganda and media coverage, which fueled the fires of panic.

The events of Salem in 1692 and the Red Scare of the 1950s were similar in that those in power used hysteria to maintain their power and control over the people. In Salem, the trials were used to justify the Puritan leaders' power and maintain strict religious adherence among the community members. The witchcraft trials gave Puritan leaders the opportunity to exert their dominance and eliminate dissenting opinions that threatened their rule. Those accused of witchcraft were frequently those viewed as a challenge to the religious authority of the Puritan leaders. Similarly, during the 1950s Red Scare, Senator Joseph McCarthy and other politicians utilized fear of communism to conduct investigations and hunt out perceived dangers to national security. McCarthy's investigations were frequently based on dubious charges and accusations, and those suspected of being communists were frequently individuals viewed as a danger to US political authority. The Red Scare gave politicians the ability to use their powers and suppress dissenting viewpoints that threatened their control. According to Ellen Schrecker, historian, "both the Puritans

in the seventeenth century and the anti-communists in the mid-twentieth century used fear and paranoia to achieve their goals" (Schrecker 102). Both Puritan leaders and anti-communist politicians exploited the hysteria to maintain their power and control over the society. The events of Salem and the Red Scare serve as a warning of how people in power can use fear and paranoia to repress dissent and preserve their influence over society.

Both instances had a tremendous influence. The Red Scare of 1950, often known as McCarthyism, was a time of strong anti-communist hysteria in the United States. Fear of communism spreading throughout the world, especially after the Soviet Union successfully built nuclear weapons, created an environment of suspicion and paranoia. Many people were accused of being communists without evidence, were often blacklisted, and lost their jobs. The Red Scare had a huge political impact, leading to the establishment of the House Un-American Activity Committee, which investigated alleged communist activity. This committee contributed to a breakdown of trust in government and chilled free speech and expression. The Salem Witch Trials, which took place in colonial Massachusetts in 1692, were marked by enormous panic and paranoia. People convicted of witchcraft were frequently tried, tortured, and executed. The impact of the Salem Witch Trials was primarily limited to colonial Massachusetts, where the trials took place. They contributed to a breakdown of faith in local government and religious authority. However, the cases ultimately resulted in a re-evaluation of the judicial system and the role of evidence in trials.

The Red Scare and the Salem Witch Trials had a tremendous cultural impact. The Red Scare created a fearful and suspicious atmosphere in American society,



which was reflected in popular culture. Many films and television series portrayed communist villains, further vilifying communism and the Soviet Union. The Salem Witch Trials served as a warning about how mass frenzy can lead to injustice and punishment. They have remained the topic of books, films, and other cultural works, reminding people of the perils of paranoia and terror.

The psychological impact of the Red Scare and the Salem Witch Trials on people accused of guilt was profound. The Red Scare had a major psychological impact on those accused of being communists, with many facing social exclusion and professional ruin as a result. Those convicted of witchcraft suffered public shame, imprisonment, and execution during the Salem Witch Trials. The psychological impact of these events emphasizes the need of sustaining due process and the rule of law in times of crisis, as well as the need for skepticism and critical thinking.

The consequences of the Red Scare and the Salem Witch Trials were not the same. The Red Scare ended after several years (1957), with many people accused of being communists eventually cleared of any wrongdoing. Many accusations were based on scant evidence, and the people realized that the government and other authorities had overreached in their pursuit of communist infiltrators. The Red Scare contributed to a breakdown in trust in government, which eventually led to a rethinking of the government's role in monitoring and prosecuting suspected subversives. As people began to speak out against McCarthy's abuses of power, the Red Scare ushered in a new period of liberalism and freedom of expression. . After several months (early 1693), the Salem Witch Trials ended, with many accused being found guilty and hanged. However, it became evident in the years that followed that the trials were a grievous injustice. People began to mistrust the court system, as well

as the use of torture and coerced confessions to obtain evidence from the accused. The Salem Witch Trials also contributed to a collapse in trust in religious authorities, resulting in a rethinking of the church's role in colonial society. The trials served as a cautionary tale about the risks of mob hysteria and the importance of a fair and just court system.

The Salem Witch Trials and the Red Scare are cautionary stories about the perils of hysteria and fear in society. They demonstrate how fear and paranoia may lead to a collapse in trust in government and other institutions, as well as the need of adhering to due process and the rule of law. "Both events remind us that fear is a potent emotion that can lead people to take actions that they may later regret," historian Robert H. Abzug (26) declares. The outcomes of these events also demonstrate the power of collective action and the importance of speaking out against injustice, as people eventually realized the grave errors made in both cases.

In both situations, the aftereffects of hysteria and injustice were felt for many years. The Red Scare contributed to a fearful and suspicious atmosphere that persisted long into the 1960s. The Salem Witch Trials, on the other hand, contributed to a rising mistrust against religious authority and the use of witchcraft charges as a form of societal control. Both episodes serve as warnings of the perils of public hysteria and the need of safeguarding all individuals' rights and liberties, even in times of fear and uncertainty.

The *Crucible* consists of four acts; each presents the development of the hysteria event in Salem, Massachusetts. In the play, the protagonist Abigail Williams is considered the engine of the event, her desire for John Proctor leads to what is

ominous, and everyone is carried away with it. Self-greed and the mix of complex feelings of each character in the play, parallel with the actual characters in the history of Salem in 1692, made the revolution and dark spot in American history.

In-depth analyzing the play, we will look into each character's (two main characters) feelings development through each act.

### **III.4. ACT 1**

#### **Abigail Williams:**

In Arthur Miller's play "The Crucible," Abigail Williams is the principal accuser in the Salem witch trials. Abigail is portrayed in the play as a young woman, an orphan who had an affair with John Proctor, a married farmer for whom she worked as a servant. When Proctor's wife, Elizabeth, discovered the affair, she fired Abigail from their home.

Abigail is portrayed in the play as a manipulative and vengeful figure who accuses innocent people of witchcraft in order to divert attention away from her misdeeds and avoid punishment. Abigail is presented as the driving force behind the witch-hunts, urging other girls to accuse people with her and using her position to persuade the court in her favor. Many innocent individuals are killed because of Abigail's allegations in the play, notably John Proctor, who is wrongly accused of witchcraft after attempting to reveal Abigail's lies. Abigail Williams is depicted as a symbol of the threats of public hysteria and the potency of false accusations; Miller used her actions as a parallel to criticize McCarthyism in the 1950s. The protagonist considers the villain in the story, so she is filled with feelings. Here are some exhibited feelings by Abigail in ACT1:

1-Resentment of Elizabeth Proctor: Abigail Williams is portrayed as a multifaceted character who harbors strong feelings for both John and Elizabeth Proctor. She is portrayed as a young woman who is profoundly resentful of Elizabeth, John's wife, and is willing to go to any length to get rid of her so that she can be with John. In Act I, Abigail's sentiments for Elizabeth are clear in her chat with John. She attacks Elizabeth, calling her a "lying, cold, sniveling woman" who is unfit to be his wife (Miller 22). Abigail's scorn for Elizabeth is also demonstrated later in the play when she accuses Elizabeth of witchcraft, triggering a series of events that leads to the Salem witch trials.

2- Obsession with John Proctor: In the first act, Abigail's obsession with John is very evident. She is desperate to be with him and tries manipulating him into leaving Elizabeth. She tells John that she is waiting for him every night and cannot sleep dreaming of him (Miller 22).

"I look for John Proctor that took me from my sleep and put knowledge in my heart!" Abigail's desperation is heightened when she accuses Tituba of coercing her into drinking blood and making a contract with the Devil. She does this to divert attention and sympathy away from herself and to seek pity from people around her.

3-Deceitfulness and Manipulation: Abigail's behavior in the first act shows her manipulative and cunning nature. She is willing to lie and blame others to get what she wants. However, her behavior indicated she was afflicted, possibly out of desperation and emotional pain.

"We danced, uncle, and when you leaped out of the bush so suddenly, Betty was frightened, and then she fainted."

"Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things, and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night, and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you" (Miller 22).

### **John Proctor:**

Proctor is a farmer in his thirties who is well respected, but he is a troubled past.

Proctor is a complex character, heroic and flawed at the same time. He is a man of integrity who values his reputation and strives to do what is right, but he is also guilty and ashamed of his past infidelities. A symbol of the struggle of personal conscience against societal pressure, he is faced with the choice of acknowledging the witchcraft that would have saved his life but ruined his reputation or protesting his innocence and facing execution. Proctor's character arc in the show is one of redemption. He begins as a person fighting with his conscience, attempting to remove himself from the town's witchcraft charges. However, as the game progresses and his engagement in the process grows, he becomes aware of the unfairness and understands that he must take a position.

Proctor's decision to confess to adultery is pivotal in the play. It is a brave act of honesty and self-awareness on his part that allows him to reclaim his integrity and confront the court's dishonesty. His decision to rip up the confession and accept his fate, on the other hand, is even nobler, demonstrating his dedication to his values and refusal to compromise his beliefs. In the first act, Proctor's emotions are a mix of guilt, rage, irritation, and reluctance. He is battling his conscience and the urge to do the right thing while simultaneously attempting to protect his reputation and family.

1-Guilt: "I have known her, sir. I have known her." (Miller 12)

Proctor is referring to Abigail Williams, with whom he had an affair, and is feeling guilty about his past actions

2-Anger: "Do you look for whippin'? ... I will whip you if you dare leave this house again!" (Miller 12)

Proctor is angry with his servant Mary Warren for leaving the house to attend the "witchcraft" trials.

3-Frustration: "I mean it solemnly, Rebecca; I like not the smell of this 'authority.'" (Miller 32)

Proctor is frustrated with the authorities in Salem and their handling of the "witchcraft" accusations.

4-Reluctance: "I do not know that line. But it is hard to think so pious a woman be secretly a Devil's bitch after seventy years of such good prayer." (Miller 47)

Proctor is reluctant to accuse Rebecca Nurse of witchcraft, as he believes she is a good woman and has no evidence against her.

5-Shame: "I have made a bell of my honor! I have rung the doom of my good name." (Miller 35)

John is ashamed of his affair with Abigail Williams and how it has damaged his reputation in the community.

To look more into how Miller portrayed the hysteria in ACT1. Arthur Miller uses various literary techniques to portray the theme of hysteria in Act 1 of "The

Crucible." One way he does this is by using dialogue between the characters. When Betty Parris and Ruth Putnam are found unconscious, the townspeople immediately speculate about the cause. Their dialogue becomes increasingly frenzied, with accusations and finger-pointing fueling the collective hysteria.

Miller also employs stage directions and character actions to create an eerie and unsettling atmosphere that reinforces the sense of panic and hysteria. For example, Betty and Ruth exhibit physical signs of hysteria, such as shaking and convulsing. Moreover, the dimly lit room and the characters being half in shadow add to the unsettling mood. Additionally, Miller uses the character of Abigail Williams to illustrate the dangers of unchecked hysteria. Initially presented as a victim, Abigail manipulates the other girls into making false accusations, which shows how hysteria can be used to manipulate and have severe consequences for innocent people.

Miller portrays hysteria in Act 1 of "The Crucible" through dialogue, stage directions, and character actions. He creates an atmosphere of panic and fears that feeds into the collective hysteria of the community, and he uses the character of Abigail to show the dangers of unchecked hysteria.

### **III.5. ACT 2**

#### **Abigail Williams:**

In ACT 2, Abigail continues to be manipulative and controlling toward Salem girls.

"ABIGAIL: Why do you come, yellow bird? MARY WARREN, terrified, pleading: Abby, do not do that to me, please! ABIGAIL, stepping up to her: Abby? Who is Abby? I am Mary Warren now. (The girls spring up and rush to Mary Warren.)" (Miller 74); in this scene, Abigail and the other girls are in the room with Mary Warren, who has recently returned from court and seems to be having second thoughts about their accusations of witchcraft. Sensing Mary's wavering resolve, Abigail begins acting as if a spirit or bird is attacking her and calls out to the girls, asking why they have sent the spirit to torment her.

This shows the ability of Abigail to manipulate the girl's decision and takes control over them, just by pretending to be under attack, to turn their back on Mary Warren and continue their false accusations of witchcraft. Her power over the other girls is further reinforced by her ability to adopt different personas and identities, allowing her to control the narrative and manipulate those around her to suit her purposes.

Abigail, in ACT2, reveals her romantic side and affection toward John more and more, (A married man who had a previous affair)

Give me a word, John. A soft word. (Pause.) John, I am waiting for you every night. (Proctor looks at her as she reaches for his hand.) ABIGAIL, with a flash of anger: How do you call me child!" (Miller 52). In this line, she attempts to relight their relationship by pleading with him to show her affection. She asks him for a "soft word," indicating her desire for tenderness and intimacy. However, John's rejection makes her angry and frustrated toward him, even feeling like he thinks of her as a child only. Her anger continues more toward his wife.



Abigail's desire for John Proctor is a significant driving force behind her actions in the play. Her jealousy and anger over his rejection ultimately lead her to falsely accuse his wife and other innocent people of gaining power and control over him. This line shows that her feelings are just one example of how Abigail's desires and emotions fuel the more significant conflict in the play.

### **John Proctor:**

A deep sense of guilt, regret, and moral conflict characterizes Proctor's feelings in Act 2 of *The Crucible*. He is caught between his desire to do the right thing and his dread of the consequences of his actions, and this conflict drives much of the play's drama.

He fights with guilt over his previous affair with Abigail Williams, as well as the desire to do what is best for his wife and family. "Abby, I may think of you softly from time to time. But I will cut off my hand before I ever reach for you again. Wipe it out of mind. We never touched, Abby." (Miller 23) In this line, Proctor shows his guilt and regret over his affair with Abigail and his determination not to repeat the mistake.

In addition, another struggle is eating up. John is either preserving his reputation or confessing to witchcraft and being honest toward his friend in front of the community of Salem. As he grapples with this decision, he considers the impact that it will have on his family.

Proctor says, "I have three children—how may I teach them to walk like men in the world, and I sold my friends?" (Miller 52) reflects Proctor's sense of moral responsibility and his concern for his children. He is worried that if he confesses to

witchcraft, he will set a bad example for his children and undermine his ability to teach them the values of honesty and integrity.

After seeing the hysteria in ACT1, Miller in ACT2 shows more of the hysteria through the characters' reactions to the accusations of witchcraft and the fear and suspicion that are spreading through the community. The play shows how easily lies and rumors can pull people and how dangerous it can be when fear and hysteria take hold.

In ACT2 is shown that fear and suspicion are now controlling Salem. The town starts to believe the most outlandish accusations without evidence. The scene where Elizabeth Proctor is arrested and taken away vividly portrays the hysteria that has taken hold. The authorities arrive with an arrest order for her, and despite the lack of evidence, they are convinced of her guilt only on the word of Abigail Williams and the other girls. The other characters' reactions to the news of Elizabeth's detention demonstrate the panic, with some believing she is guilty and others defending her innocence.

Furthermore, the scene where Mary Warren gives Elizabeth a poppet that she made in court is an example of how the hysteria around witchcraft accusations is spreading in Salem. Mary Warren is a member of a group of girls who have been accusing people of witchcraft. She is convinced she has done something wrong by making the poppet, which is a harmless toy. However, the other girls have convinced her that the poppet is evidence of witchcraft and that she will be accused if she does not follow their accusations. Elizabeth understands that the poppet is a harmless toy but cannot stop the accusations from spreading. The hysteria has taken hold of the

town, and people are willing to believe the worst about others without any evidence or proof.

These scenes are stark examples of how Arthur showed hysteria in ACT2, the consequences of unchecked hysteria, and mass hysteria in Salem.

### **III.6. ACT 3**

#### **Abigail Williams:**

In ACT3 of The Crucible is a crucial moment in the play, where tensions come to a head, and the characters are pushed to their limits.

Abigail Williams is feeling threatened and cornered. Her lies and accusations of witchcraft have started to spiral out of control, and the townspeople are questioning her motives and credibility. She is present in the courtroom as John and the others are accused and questioned; as Proctor tries to expose her lies more, Abigail feels the pressure and is desperate to maintain the position of power. "ABIGAIL: (in a strikingly low voice) Why? Why do you come, yellow bird? I know not. A wind, a cold wind, has come. (The girls begin to whimper.) (III. 118-120)" This shows her desperation and the fear of her.

"ABIGAIL: We danced and Tituba conjured Ruth Putnam's dead sisters. That is all. And mark this — let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things, and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and bring a pointed reckoning that will shudder you. (III 22-27)" Abigail is aware of growing skepticism about the girls' allegations; Abigail knows her credibility is at stake. She tries to threaten and bully the other girls into sticking to their stories without betraying them, but some girls break down under pressure.

Abigail, in Act 3, is feeling trapped; her fear and desperation drive her to become increasingly hysterical as the play progresses.

### **John proctor:**

Frustration and despair are what John experienced and felt during ACT 3. He felt a range of emotions as he tried to expose Abigail and tries to save himself and other accused individuals.

"PROCTOR: I speak my sins; I cannot judge another r. (Danforth is now staring at him, horrified d. A pause.) I have made a bell of my honor! I have rung the doom of my good name — you will believe me, Mr. Danforth! My wife is innocent, except she knew a whore when she saw o e! (III. 133-137)"

This quote shows John Proctor's deep remorse and guilt for his past infidelities and his determination to clear his name and protect his wife from false accusations. He admitted his guilt, refused to judge others, challenged the court's authority, and exposed the hypocrisy of the witch trials.

Miller portrays hysteria in ACT3 as a destructive and irrational force that threatens to destroy the fabric of society, and he uses courtroom scenes and dialogues to expose the dangers of mob mentality and groupthink.

The courtroom scenes became intense, where the accusations and denials flew back and forth, and the tension and anxiety escalated with each passing moment. Miller also demonstrates how fear and paranoia drive the frenzy, as people believe their friends and neighbors are witches working for the Devil. This is demonstrated in the scenario where Judge Hathorne and Deputy Governor Danforth

question Martha Corey, who is charged with witchcraft. They persist in pressing her despite her denials, claiming she must be a witch since she will not admit it.

Miller uses the courtroom intensity to expose the community of Salem in ACT3, to show how people abandoned logic and reason.

### **III.7. ACT 4**

Act 4 serves as a climax and conclusion to the play, highlighting the themes of integrity, truth, and the devastating consequences of unfounded accusations and mob mentality.

Recognizing and addressing emotions. Abigail William's feelings are not explicitly stated, as she does not appear in this act. However, her actions and words from previous acts can give insight into her character and emotions. Her contributions to the play were evident in each act; her absence in Act 4 means her feelings are left to the audience's interpretation based on her previous actions and words.

Miller portrays hysteria in ACT4 by focusing on the protagonist John Proctor. He portrays John as a man consumed by guilt and despair. He is responsible for his downfall and the persecution of innocent people in Salem. He battles his conscience and the weight of his guilt as he realizes the gravity of the situation and the community's danger. Miller portrays Proctor's feelings through his dialogue and actions in Act 4.

At the beginning of Act 4, Proctor is resigned to his fate and willing to confess to being a witch to save his lie. However, as he prepares to sign the false confession, he changes his heart and tears up the document. He states:

"Proctor: I have confessed myself! Is there no good penitence, but it is public? God does not need my name nailed upon the church! God sees my name; God knows how black my sins! It is enough!" (Miller 143)

This shows Proctor's inner turmoil as he deals with the gravity of the situation and the consequences of his actions. Proctor's deep guilt, which he feels he has admitted to his guilt, makes the prospect of signing false confessions unbearable.

"Proctor: Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my lie! Because I lie and sign myself to lies! Because I am not worth the dust on their feet that hang! How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name!" (Miller 143)

In this line, Proctor's anxiety and despair are obvious as he grapples with the implications of his actions and the damage he has caused. Even as he faces death, he is obsessed by the need to safeguard his reputation and maintain his integrity.

Proctor's actions are a powerful example of how Miller portrays the consequences of hysteria, as he shows how individuals can become caught up in the fear and paranoia of the community and lose sight of what is right and just. Proctor's refusal to sign the false confession demonstrates the importance of standing up for one's principles, even in adversity.

The Crucible was written in the 1950s during an intense political and social crisis in the United States, known as McCarthy era. It's known that Arthur Miller was influenced by his life in the process of writing.

Arthur was personally impacted by Joseph McCarthy's anti-communism. In 1956, he was summoned to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). He was asked for the names of alleged communist associates, but he refused. Miller cited his belief in protecting individual freedoms and his opposition to the unfair tactics of McCarthyism as his reasons for not complying with the committee's demands. His refusal to betray his principles and his stand against McCarthyism highlight his unwavering commitment to his values and his determination to defend individual rights.

Here Arthur says that he used John Proctor's character to reflect his personal life and experiences. John Proctor, who struggles with his guilt and wrestles with the decision to confess or maintain his integrity, can be seen as a reflection of Miller's moral dilemma during the McCarthy era. Miller's refusal to betray his beliefs and the stands he took against McCarthyism and to not betray his beliefs to name names to the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) is echoed in Proctor's unwavering refusal to falsely confess to witchcraft.

Finally, Arthur Miller's play *The Melting Pot* reflects his experiences and historical events during the McCarthy era in the 1950s. Through parables, Miller illuminates the dangers of McCarthyism and the injustice of false accusations and persecution. His refusal to work with HUAC and his moral stance against McCarthyism is reflected in the show's themes of integrity, individuality, and the consequences of conformity. "The Crucible" is a moving examination of the human condition, the abuse of power, and the significance of standing up for what you believe in, making it a timeless work of writing that continues to captivate audiences.





**General Conclusion**

Arthur Miller is largely considered as one of the twentieth century's most important and influential playwrights. He managed to represent very critically the events in the 1950s with Senator McCarthy and the anti-communist network created using other events of history. The American way of thinking drastically changed in a few years. The red scare was one of the most significant concerns of the Americans after the great depression of 1929, which caused colossal unemployment and a loss of faith in the Capitalist system. Besides, the way Miller criticizes the chaos caused by McCarthyism in the 1950s using the events occurring at the end of the seventeenth century represents an undeniable achievement. As many connections can be found in the events of Salem and the ones of McCarthyism, Miller profoundly commented on those in power to avoid a massacre and mass hysteria. However, because this work, was released in 1953, it took some time for people to recognize the parallelism between the two events. The Salem Witch Hunt is still one of the most famous in world history, and despite numerous examinations, the fundamental cause of these occurrences of the mysterious conditions endured by the afflicted remains unclear. The mass hysteria concept is used in this study, in which the pressure of a highly secluded community of rigorously Puritan individuals results in desperation, hallucinations, visions, mental problems, and cold people taking advantage of the situation. On the other hand, mass hysteria is also appropriate to McCarthyism because certain anti-communist American citizens' political ideas were rigorous and uncompromising, leading them to see enemies where there were not. In the same way, as in Salem, where many people were accused of witchcraft in 1692

though they were not; in the 1950s, many people were accused of being communists though they were not.

Accusers suffered from social or labor exclusion in those cases. On the one hand, social exclusion in the seventeenth century and a Puritan society was one of the worst punishments as their religious conception of life was centered on the community. On the other hand, labor exclusion in the 1950s in America meant a return to the Great Depression, from which many families still had not recovered economically.

The historical context is crucial in understanding the panic that occurred in Salem. Strict religious beliefs and social hierarchies, creating a breeding ground for fear and suspicion, characterized the Puritan society in Salem. The accusations of witchcraft that led to mass hysteria were fueled by the community's belief in the supernatural and the Devil's influence. Therefore, a historical approach is necessary to comprehend the societal and political factors that contributed to the Salem Witch Trials and the consequences that led to this frenzy. A psychoanalytical approach can also provide insight into the psychological factors that contributed to the hysteria in Salem by studying the two main characters "Abigail Williams" and "John Proctor" and their motivations and actions during the 4 acts of the play. The fear and paranoia gripped the townspeople can be attributed to their repressed desires and anxieties, which were projected onto others through accusations of witchcraft. This approach allows us to understand how individual and collective psychological factors can contribute to developing hysteria in a community.

"*The Crucible*" has contributed significantly to our understanding of the hysteria in Arthur Miller's play, highlighting the dangerous consequences of groupthink and the power of fear and suspicion to override reason and logic. Through portraying characters such as Abigail Williams and Reverend Parris, Miller demonstrates how personal motives and desires can fuel mass hysteria. Thus, "The Crucible" is a cautionary tale about the dangers of unchecked fear and the importance of critical thinking in preventing mass hysteria.

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