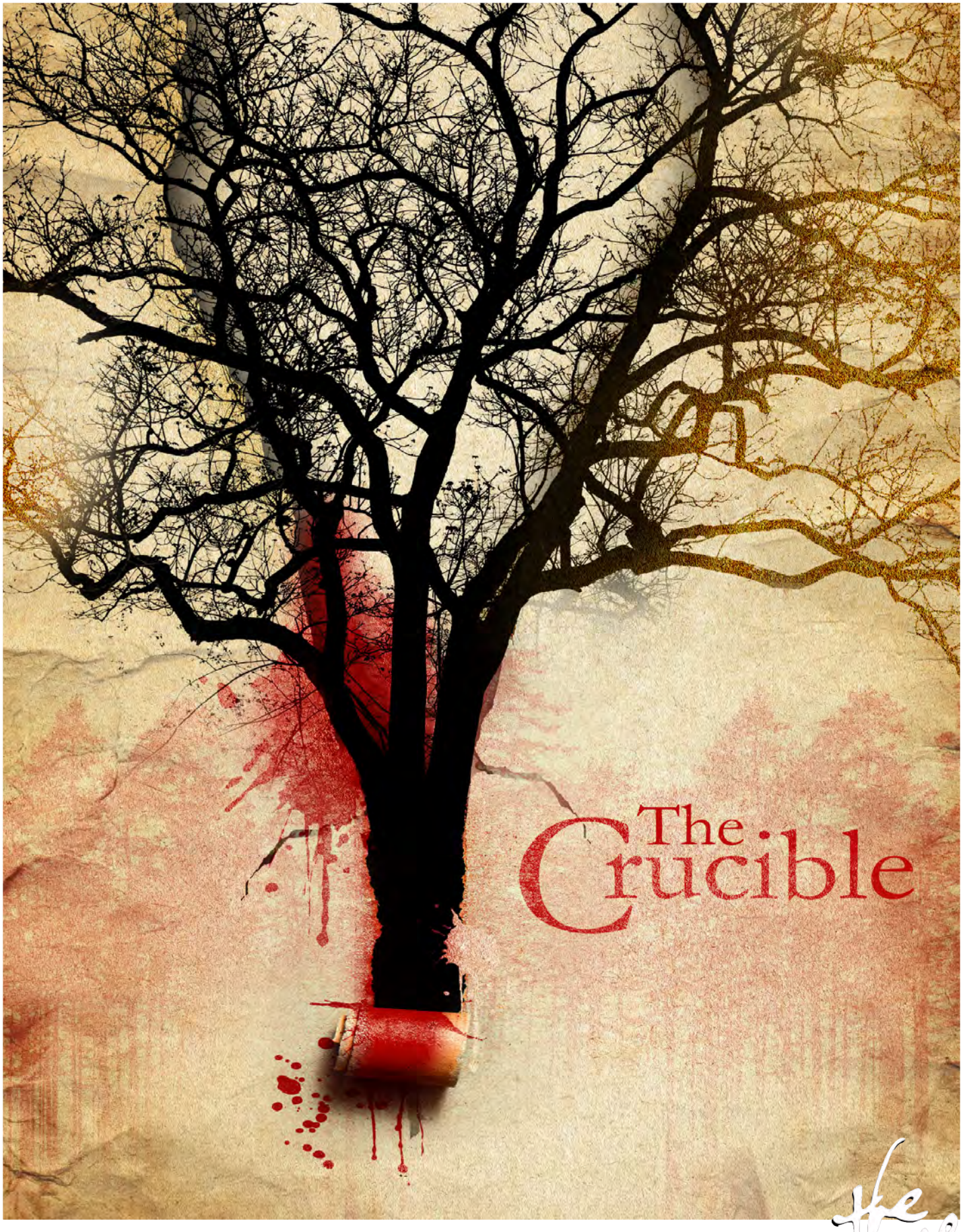
ARKANSAS REPERTORY THEATRE




Study Guide, October 2016
Prepared by Robert Neblett

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NOTE FOR EDUCATORS:
Throughout this Study Guide you will find words, names and phrases in bold type. These items are key terms to understanding the world and context of *The Crucible* in greater detail. We encourage you to identify these items as vocabulary terms and as suggestions for further research and study with your students, both before and after you attend the performance at The Rep. The master list of multi-disciplinary vocabulary terms and names is included at the end of the Study Guide for easy reference.

# INTRODUCTION

Since its premiere in 1953, master playwright Arthur Miller's chilling portrayal of the historic Salem Witch Trials has become an American stage classic as well as a terrifying metaphor for modern times. *The Crucible* explores the insidious dangers of paranoia, mass **hysteria** and prejudice, all potent issues which could be ripped from today's headlines.

Inspired by the "McCarthy Red Scare" of the 1950s, Miller's white-hot play is a powerful testament to the injustices that can be committed in the pursuit of piety and to the self-destructive nature of intolerance.

Amid a rash of mysterious illnesses and rumors of strange behavior among the young girls of Salem, Massachusetts, suspicions of malevolent forces begin to cloud the judgment of the town's citizens and they pledge to root out the evil in their colony. Children's games soon turn deadly as the people of Salem are whipped into a bloodthirsty frenzy by fear and distrust. Neighbor turns against neighbor, whispers become testimony and lies are taken for truths. As the minds of the townsfolk become poisoned by anxiety and doubt, even upright farmer and family man John Proctor is falsely accused of witchcraft and must fight a corrupt court to protect the virtue of his name.

"Arthur Miller, one of the great American moralists, wrote *The Crucible*, a play about the 17th Century Salem, Mass. witch hunts and trials, during another period of witch hunts and trials in America: the mid-20th Century HUAC Congressional hearings," said Director Paul Barnes. "It is fascinating to view our new century through the probing moral questions that permeate Miller's work: What does it mean to have a conscience and to let it guide us? How can we be better human beings?  I'm thrilled to revisit Miller's great play at this tumultuous time in our country's history and continuing evolution, and in this centenary anniversary year in which Arthur Miller is being so widely honored and remembered."

The Crucible

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."
- George Santayana, 1905

# SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY

**Setting:**
**Time -** Fall of 1692 and Spring of 1693
**Place -** Colonial Salem, Massachusetts

## Act One

Reverend Parris' daughter, Betty, has mysteriously fallen ill, lying paralyzed in their home. The night before, Parris' servant Tituba had been discovered leading several young girls (including Betty and Parris' niece Abigail Williams) in a mysterious ritual in the woods. Could witchcraft have caused Betty's condition? Parris questions Abigail, who repeatedly denies any wrongdoing and Abigail threatens the other girls stick to the same account of events.


Samuel Parris House

John Proctor, a local farmer, confronts Abigail, with whom he previously had an affair. Abigail's romantic advances towards John are rebuffed.

Accusations and tempers fly as Reverend Hale, an investigator of witchcraft, questions the girls about what happened. Tituba confesses to communing with the devil and Abigail offers to name other "witches" of **Salem**.

Nearly forty townspeople are arrested on charges of witchcraft. John Proctor and his wife, Elizabeth, know the accusations to be false. Their maid, Mary Warren, gives Elizabeth a rag doll and reveals that she has been attending court hearings where Elizabeth has been accused of witchcraft. A mob arrives to arrest Elizabeth. Ezekiel Cheever identifies the rag doll as an instrument of black magic, and Elizabeth surrenders herself, despite John's protests.

## Act Two

A month later, during Martha Corey's trial, Proctor arrives with a document signed by ninety-one villagers who vouch for the innocence of Elizabeth, Martha, and Rebecca Nurse. Proctor is informed that Elizabeth is pregnant and will be spared execution until the baby is born. Proctor also elicits a confession from Mary Warren, but the girls (led by Abigail) begin to convulse wildly, accusing Mary Warren herself of witchcraft. Fearing for her life, Mary recants her confession, and accuses Proctor of bargaining with the devil. Proctor, angry and frustrated, rages against the girls and the courts. He is arrested and Hale abandons the court, realizing the sham.

Site of Court House, where witch trials were held, illustration published in The New England Magazine, Volume 6, circa 1892

Four months later, a dozen townsfolk have been hanged and dozens more stand accused of witchcraft. Proctor and six others are scheduled to hang at dawn. Abigail has fled town with her uncle's life savings. Hale has been meeting with the accused, persuading them to confess, repent, and avoid execution. Proctor agrees to sign a written confession but refuses to accuse others. When he is told that his confession will be displayed publicly, he rips up the paper to preserve his good name. Despite pleas from Hale and Elizabeth, John is led to the gallows to be hanged.

# CAST OF CHARACTERS

**John Proctor:** A farmer whose strong will and conviction lead him to stand up against the false accusations of witchcraft.

**Abigail Williams:** Niece of Reverend Parris and primary accuser in the trials.

**Reverend John Hale:** Young minister from a neighboring town who has made a career of exposing witches.

**Elizabeth Proctor:** John Proctor's wife.

**Reverend Samuel Parris:** Salem's town minister. Father of Betty, uncle of Abigail.

**Rebecca Nurse:** Elderly wife of Francis. Respected by the community.

**Francis Nurse:** A farmer and husband of Rebecca Nurse.

**Judge Danforth:** Chief Judge presiding over the Salem Witch trials.

**Giles Corey:** A farmer who often appears as a plaintiff in court.

**Mrs. Ann Putnam and Thomas Putnam:** Wealthy citizens and parents of Ruth Putnam.

**Ruth Putnam:** The Putnam's only remaining child who falls into a stupor.

**Tituba:** Servant of Reverend Paris from Barbados. Herbal healer.

**Mary Warren:** The current maid of the Proctor family.

**Betty Parris:** Young daughter of Reverend Parris, who falls ill after carousing with Tituba and the girls.

**Ezekiel Cheever:** Salem court clerk.

**Judge John Hathorne:** One of judges who presides over the witch trials.

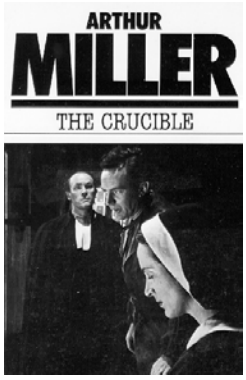
**Mercy Lewis and Susanna Wallcott:** Teenage girls who accuse residents of witchcraft.

**Marshal Herrick:** Salem town marshal.

**Sarah Good:** Homeless woman. Accused by Tituba of witchcraft.

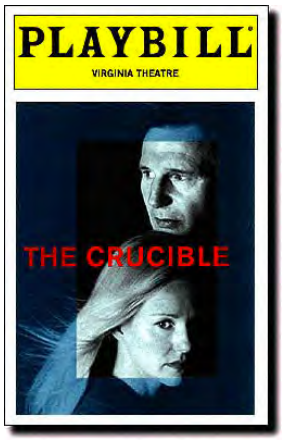
NOTE: While the characters in the play are based upon historical personages, Miller's *The Crucible* must be regarded as a fictional recreation of true events.

# PRODUCTION HISTORY




*The Crucible* opened on Broadway in January 1953, with direction by Jed Harris and scenery by Boris Aronson. Miller was not happy with this production. Nevertheless, it won the Tony Award for Best New Play later that year.

The play was successfully revived on Broadway in 2002, with a cast that featured Laura Linney as Elizabeth, Liam Neeson as John, and Kristen Bell as Susanna Wolcott. This production was nominated for many Tony Awards and **Drama Desk Award**s.




Liam Neeson & Laura Linney as John and Elizabeth Proctor

In 2016, experimental Belgian director Ivo van Hove staged the play in New York employing an **avant-garde** concept, in which the action is placed within a stylized schoolroom setting. The cast featured Ben Whishaw as Proctor, Saoirse Ronan as Abigail, and Sophie Okonedo as Elizabeth. While nominated for several Tony Awards, it was beaten in almost every category by van Hove's revival of Miller's *A View from the Bridge*.

Daniel Day-Lewis as Proctor

Several film versions of the play have been made, including a 1957 version with a screenplay by existential novelist **Jean-Paul Sartre**, and an Academy Award-nominated 1996 motion picture starring Miller's son-in-law Daniel Day-Lewis as Proctor and Winona Ryder as Abigail.

In 1984, avant-garde New York performance company **The Wooster Group** created a work that included themes and text from *The Crucible* entitled L.S.D. (...Just the High Points...). The production, which starred Willem Defoe, Spalding Gray, Steve Buscemi, Kate Valk, and Ron Vawter, was highly controversial, particularly because of its use of **blackface**. After receiving a cease-and-desist letter from Miller, the company rewrote the sections that referenced *The Crucible.* The Wooster Group has also stirred up controversy with its blackface production of Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* (1993) and *Cry, Trojans!,* a 2014 adaptation of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* which incorporated negative stereotypes of Native Americans.

In 2014, the Civic **Ballet** of San Luis Obispo, California, premiered a ballet version of *The Crucible. The Crucible* was adapted into an **opera** by Robert Ward in 1961, which won the 1962 Pulitzer Prize for Music.

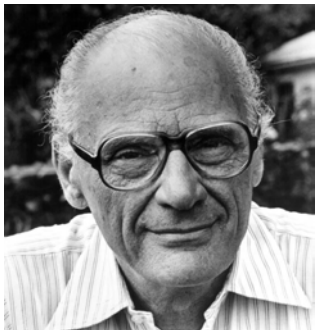
John Proctor (Ryan Beck) dances with Betty Parris (Jenna Lee) in the Civic Ballet of San Luis Obispo production "The Crucible"

In 2013, Chicago playwright Brian Bauman placed Miller's play in a high school setting, retitling it *A **Crucible.*** It included a play-within-a-play and tackled issues such as gay bashing and teenage pregnancy pacts.

In Stephen Karam's popular 2007 drama speech and debate (staged at UALR in 2014), one of the central characters crafts a performance piece based upon Abraham Lincoln meeting the accusing girls from *The Crucible.*

# ARTHUR MILLER

"The structure of a play is always the story of how the birds came home to roost."



Arthur Miller (1915-2005) is considered one of the greatest American playwrights of the 20th century, along with Tennessee Williams, Eugene O'Neill, and Edward Albee. His best known plays are *All My Sons, A View from the Bridge, The Crucible,* and the **Pulitzer Prize**-winning *Death of a Salesman*. The playwright died in 2005 at the age of 89, leaving a body of work that continues to be re-staged and adapted internationally.

Arthur Miller was born in Harlem, New York in 1915, to an immigrant family of Polish and Jewish descent. His father, Isidore, owned a successful coat manufacturing business, and his mother, Augusta, to whom he was closer, was an educator and an avid reader of novels. The affluent Miller family lost almost everything in the **Wall Street Crash of 1929**, and had to move from Manhattan to Flatbush, Brooklyn. After graduating high school, Miller worked a few odd jobs to save enough money to attend the University of Michigan. While in college, he wrote for the student paper and completed his first play, *No Villain*, for which he won the school's Avery Hopwood Award.

Miller's 1944 Broadway debut, *The Man Who Had All the Luck,* closed after just four performances. His next play *All My Sons* was a hit in 1947, running for almost a full year on Broadway and earning Miller his first Tony Award for Best Author. Miller wrote the first act of *Death of Salesman* in less than a day. The play, directed by Elia Kazan, opened on February 10, 1949 at the Morosco Theatre, and was acclaimed by nearly everyone, becoming an iconic stage work. *Salesman* won Miller the highest accolades in the theater world: the Pulitzer Prize, the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award and the Tony for Best Play.

In 1956, Miller divorced his first wife, Mary Slattery, his former college sweetheart with whom he had two children, Jane Ellen and Robert. Less than a month later, Miller married actress and Hollywood sex symbol **Marilyn Monroe**, whom he'd first met in 1951 at a Hollywood party. At the time, Monroe was dating Elia Kazan, who had directed Miller's *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*. When Kazan asked Miller to keep Monroe company while he dated another actress, Miller and Monroe struck up a friendship that turned into a romance. Author Norman Mailer called their marriage the union of "the Great American Brain" and "the Great American Body." Miller and Monroe's high-profile marriage placed the playwright in the Hollywood spotlight.

Arthur Miller and second wife, Marilyn Monroe

Later in 1956, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) refused to renew Miller's passport, and called him to appear before the committee. His 1953 play, the Tony Award-winning *The Crucible,* a dramatization of the **Salem witch trials of 1692** and an **allegory** about McCarthyism, was believed to be one of the reasons why Miller came under the committee's scrutiny. Miller refused to comply with the committee's demands to "out" people who had been active in certain political activities and was thus cited in **contempt** of Congress. The contempt ruling was overturned two years later.

# ARTHUR MILLER

Arthur Miller before testifying at a hearing before the House Un-American Activities Committee

In 1957, **Brooks Atkinson** wrote about Miller's stand against HUAC: "He refused to be an informer. He refused to turn his private conscience over to administration by the state. He has accordingly been found in contempt of Congress. That is the measure of the man who has written these high-minded plays."

Miller and Monroe were married for four years, during which time Monroe struggled with personal troubles and drug addiction. Miller barely wrote during their marriage, except for penning the **screenplay** of *The Misfits* as a gift for Monroe. The 1961 film, directed by John Huston, starred Monroe, Clark Gable and Montgomery Clift. Around the same time as *The Misfits* release, Monroe and Miller divorced. Monroe died the following year, and Miller's controversial 1964 drama *After the Fall* was believed to have been partially inspired by their relationship. Miller was criticized for capitalizing on his marriage to Monroe so soon after her death, although the playwright denied this.

In 1962, Miller married Austrian-born photographer Inge Morath. The couple had two children, Rebecca and Daniel. Miller insisted that their son, Daniel, who was born with **Down syndrome**, be excluded from the family's personal life. Years later, actor Daniel Day-Lewis, who married Miller's daughter Rebecca, visited his wife's brother frequently. Day-Lewis eventually persuaded Miller to make further contact with his adult son, who had been able to establish a happy life with outside support. Daniel's existence was unknown to most of the public until after Miller's death.

Daniel Day-Lewis, his wife writer/director Rebecca Miller and Rebecca's father, Arthur Miller

Miller's plays have become American classics that continue to speak to new generations of audiences. *Death of a Salesman* has had numerous screen adaptations, including a 1985 TV version that starred Dustin Hoffman, who also starred in the previous year's Broadway revival. In 1996, a film adaptation of *The Crucible* hit theaters, starring Winona Ryder, Joan Allen and Day-Lewis. Miller penned the screenplay, which earned him the sole Academy Award nomination of his career. In 1999, Miller received a Special Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre.

Miller posing with his Lifetime Achievement award with Kevin Kline, 1999

In 2002, Miller's third wife Inge Morath died. The famed playwright soon entered into a relationship with 34-year-old minimalist painter Agnes Barley. The couple were engaged but, before they could walk down the aisle, Arthur Miller died on February 10, 2005, (which happened to be the 56th anniversary of *Death of a Salesman*'s Broadway debut.) Surrounded by Barley, family and friends, the legendary playwright succumbed to heart failure, after battling cancer and pneumonia, at his home in Roxbury, Connecticut. He was 89 years old.

SOURCE: Excerpted and adapted from Biography.com

# MILLER'S WORK

Miller's plays walk the fine line between **naturalism** and poetry, as realistic characters often find themselves in larger-than-life, epic circumstances, usually concerning some iconic aspect of the 20th century American experience. Miller's first stage success, *All My Sons*, even mirrors the structure and themes of a **classical Greek tragedy** while dealing with the struggles of a post-WWII middle-class American family as they discover their heroic patriarch is far more flawed than they ever imagined.

In his development of characters and tone, Miller follows very closely in the footsteps of **Henrik Ibsen**, the "Father of **Modern drama**." Ibsen's most famous works expose hypocrisy and corruption in "perfect" homes and communities, often forcing audiences to sympathize with characters whose beliefs are antithetical to their own. Miller even adapted Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* in 1950, using Ibsen's play to draw attention to post-war corruption within the new era of prosperity in the United States.

The concept of the "American Dream" is central to Miller's work, but Miller's view of that dream is rarely idyllic or comforting, and he rejects patriotic **jingoism** in favor of an examination of the very real consequences of day-to-day life in the United States. His plays embrace the values of democracy, truth, justice, and respect and focus on the strengths of the individual on his/her own and also within the boundaries of a community. He rejects the belief that ambition and greed are necessary American values to achieve prosperity. He warns us against repeating the sins of our past and reminds us of the reality of democracy - living together is often a struggle. He rejects the emerging corporate philosophy that humans are disposable in an industrialized society that constantly strives for newer, more efficient models.

In 1999, when he accepted the Special **Tony Award** for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre, he offered a warning to producers and audiences on the cusp of the new millennium. In a Broadway season that featured acclaimed **revival**s of Tennessee Williams (*A Streetcar Named Desire*) and Eugene O'Neill (*The Iceman Cometh*), as well as his own *Death of a Salesman*, Miller cautioned against the prevailing economic structures of New York commercial theatre that favored musicals and discouraged the mounting of new "**straight play**s" (non-musical works).

Arthur Miller holds up his Lifetime Achievement Award at the 1999 Tony Awards in New York.

"Well, all the plays that I was trying to write were plays that would grab an audience by the throat and not release them, rather than presenting an emotion which you could observe and walk away from."
-Arthur Miller

# THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS

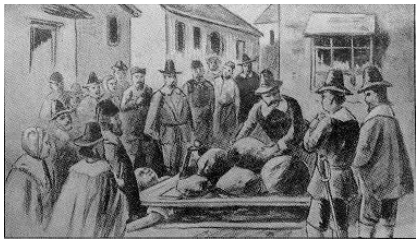
In 1692, less than a century after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, the American Colonies were rocked by an infamous scandal that echoes to the present day. The citizens of the Massachusetts Bay Colony became embroiled in a real-life **witch hunt** that resulted in the executions of 20 colonists and false accusations against as many as 200. At the time, the population of Salem Village (present-day Danvers, MA) was no more than 600 residents, so these numbers may be seen as catastrophic.

"Tituba and the Children," illustration by Alfred Fredericks, circa 1878

In January 1692, Betty Parris and Abigail Williams began having uncontrollable convulsions and screaming fits. The next month, after several other young girls experienced the same symptoms, Rev. Samuel Parris' slave Tituba was arrested along with the homeless Sarah Good and the elderly Sarah Osborn. When they were brought to trial, Tituba confessed, hoping that doing so would reduce the harshness of her punishment. Suspicion spread like wildfire through the village and the trials soon overwhelmed the courts. Despite the protestations of public figures like minister Cotton Mather, the prosecution used "**spectral evidence**" (hallucinations and convulsive fits) to convict and execute 20 members of the Salem community, including Giles Corey, who was "pressed" to death by having stones placed on him. Maintaining his innocence to the end, his final words were, "More weight."


Salem Village Witchcraft Victim's Memorial, Danvers, Mass

In 1693, as the events of the trials and executions became known throughout New England, the proceedings were condemned and the accused were pardoned. Abigail Williams disappeared the day after she gave her final testimony in June 1692; Arthur Miller claims that she later became a prostitute, although evidence supporting this assertion is spurious. In 1697, a day of fasting was declared in penance for the trials. In August 1992, 300 years after the trials, a public memorial made of 20 rough-hewn stone benches with victims' names carved into them was erected in Salem to honor the memory of the condemned. Nobel Laureate **Elie Wiesel**, a survivor of the Nazi **concentration camp**s, dedicated the memorial.



The Pressing of Giles Corey

Among the legends surrounding the Salem Witch Trials, it is believed that the spirit of Giles Corey still haunts the Howard Street Cemetery in Salem. His ghost was reported to appear just before the Great Salem Fire of 1914.

Historians, scientists, and psychologists have long attempted to find a root cause for the mass hysteria that ended in the deaths of so many Salem residents.

# THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS

The combined effects of the battles between British and French settlers, a recent smallpox epidemic, and legal disputes regarding land rights heightened tensions among the community; coupled with the colony's strict **Puritan** religious codes and the superstitions brought with them from England, the town became a powder keg for suspicion and mistrust. In 1976, scientists published a theory that a fungal infection of the town's grain supply may have caused the hallucinations, vomiting, and muscle spasms experienced by some of those accused of witchcraft. This theory has recently fallen out of favor.

Matthew Hopkins' *The Discovery of Witches* (1647), showing witches identifying their familiar spirits

Many of the Puritan settlers were still feeling the aftershocks of England's own tragic witch craze, spearheaded by the zealous "Witchfinder General" Matthew Hopkins, whose crusade throughout East Anglia resulted in the arrest and deaths of dozens of men and women. Spurred on by King James I's own interest in the supernatural, Hopkins and his methods of discovery (such as "pricking" and "swimming") drew large crowds, turning him into a minor celebrity of the time. He cited the 15th century treatise "Malleus Maleficarum" ("Hammer of Witches") by Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, (itself a remnant of the Catholic Inquisition of the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance - which was established to root out heresy and paganism), as the primary inspiration for his witch-hunting strategies. Historians have since proved his techniques to be little more than torture and often faked to create desired results. In fact, much of the misdirection found in the Salem court transcripts, as well as the physical "proof" of witchcraft, were drawn directly from Hopkins' *The Discovery of Witches* (1647).

In the 1973 book *Witches, Midwives and Nurses,* co-authors Barbara Ehrenreich (*Nickel and Dimed*) and Dierdre English explore a feminist revisiting of the historical events surrounding the witch craze of the 17th century. They believe the craze grew out of the female-dominated disciplines of healing and childbirth, proposing that the male-dominated field of professional medicine originates around the same time as the European witch hunts, thus theorizing that men fabricated the hysteria (itself a gendered term) in order to usurp women's roles in healing for political and financial purposes. This theory is integral to English playwright Caryl Churchill's 1976 drama with music *Vinegar Tom*. The play's title takes its name from the name of a **familiar**, or witch's animal companion, portrayed in an illustration from Matthew Hopkins' *The Discovery of Witches.*

WGN's Salem Promo Poster

Playwright and screenwriter Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa wrote a sequel to Miller's *The Crucible* in 2013 called *Abigail/1702*, which is a fictional account of Abigail Williams' life during the ten years following the Witch Trials. In 2015, WGN premiered a paranormal horror television series based upon the Salem Witch Trials entitled *Salem*. Its third season premieres in November 2016.

# HUAC AND THE RED SCARE

Arthur Miller explicitly states that he wrote *The Crucible* in response to the **Red Scare** and the **House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)** investigation into Hollywood and the entertainment industry in 1947. The Red Scare of 1947 to 1957 was led by **Sen. Joseph McCarthy** and his lawyer **Roy Cohn** (who prosecuted communist spies Ethel and Julius Rosenberg in 1951, resulting in their controversial executions in 1953). Cohn's participation in the congressional hearings and the Rosenberg trial consequently caused him to be cast as the villain in Tony Kushner's **epic** play about the AIDS crisis, *Angels in America.*

Senator Joe McCarthy

In the wake of the **Communist Revolution of 1917**, American politicians were afraid that violent **anarchist**s sympathetic to the socialist cause would infiltrate the United States and threaten to overthrow the government and the American way of life, most especially the institutions of church and family. At this same time, labor disputes across the country mounted and began to radicalize workers, which legitimized the fears of Washington and Wall Street.

In the years following World War II, as the United States found itself challenged in the global scene by the growth of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, a second wave of anti-communist sentiment solidified out of the fears of a nuclear war. As the "**Cold War**" increased, distrust of potential **communist** spies began to run rampant in politics and the media. Notably **anti-intellectual** in its suspicions and accusations, the Red Scare entrapped many academics and artists, destroying their reputations and careers.

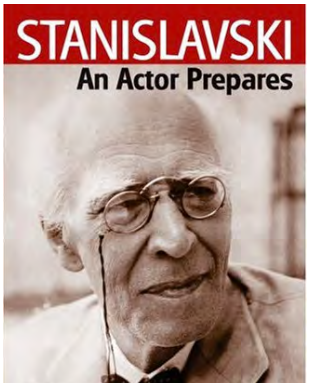
Senator Joe McCarthy

In 1947, the HUAC convened a nine-day hearing focusing on the potential communist infiltration of the Hollywood film industry. When subpoenaed to testify, a group known as the "**Hollywood Ten**" (including screenwriter **Dalton Trumbo**) refused to answer the questions put to them and were held in contempt. They, as well as numerous others, were "blacklisted" by the film industry for their suspected communist sympathies. Many artists, such as Charlie Chaplin, Paul Robeson, and Orson Welles, left Hollywood mainstream and either ended their careers or found a second wave of success later in life.

Walt Disney and Ronald Reagan famously testified to the Committee of the dangers of the communist threat, while others such as John Huston and Humphrey Bogart protested the Committee's actions.

Members of the Hollywood Ten and their families protesting the impending convictions

# HUAC AND THE RED SCARE




Many of the leaders of the theatre and film industries were suspected of ties to communism by McCarthy and the HUAC because they were acolytes of Russian actor-director **Konstantin Stanislavsky**, whose new system of realistic actor training was adapted into "The Method" by American **Lee Strasberg**, along with Stella Adler and Sanford Meisner. Strasberg and many other actors trained in Russia under Stanislavsky and then brought his theories to the United States in the early 20th century. The most notable adherents to "**Method Acting**" were Marlon Brando, James Dean, Marilyn Monroe, Paul Newman, and **Elia Kazan**.

Elia Kazan and Arthur Miller in Roxbury, 1963, discussing the forthcoming production of After The Fall at Lincoln Center

In 1951, a second series of Hollywood hearings was held in Washington. Fearful of the fate that befell those who defied the committee four years earlier, many of those called to testify cooperated the HUAC. In 1952, director Elia Kazan named several of his friends and fellow artists as communists before the Committee, thus sparing his own career. This action caused Kazan to be reviled by many in New York and Hollywood, most notably his frequent collaborator Arthur Miller, who refused to name names when called before the Committee himself. While they later reconciled, Miller's and Kazan's relationship was never the same. In 1999, when Kazan received an Academy Award for Lifetime Achievement, many in the industry boycotted the decision and the applause for his acceptance speech was tepid, as many in the audience refused to honor him because of his decades-old betrayal.


Among those whose careers were adversely affected by the committee and its **blacklist** were: Pete Seeger, Lena Horne, Lee Grant, Dashiell Hammett, Lucille Ball, Harry Belafonte, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, and Burgess Meredith.

Noted theatre critic and translator Eric Bentley chronicled the HUAC hearings in his 1971 book *Thirty Years of Treason*, which he later adapted into the 1972 play *Are You Now Or Have You Ever Been?*

British novelist **George Orwell** published his **dystopian** masterpiece ***1984*** just a few years after the HUAC hearings began. Orwell's own fears of a Stalinist **totalitarian** state are reflected in the story of Winston Smith, who works in the Ministry of Truth, an ironic name for the **propaganda** arm of a totalitarian government. Orwell's novel portrays many scenes that eerily mirror the tactics of McCarthy and Cohn. For example, one of Winston's neighbors is found guilty of "**thoughtcrime**" after being turned in by his own daughter.

# BEFORE THE PLAY

## Questions for Discussion or Writing

1. *The Crucible*'s plot revolves around a literal "witch hunt" that serves as a metaphor for the current political scene surrounding Arthur Miller in the 1950s. What metaphor would you use to describe the politics and/or society of today? How would you portray it in a play format?

2. At the end of the play, John Proctor begs his accusers to "leave me my name." Why is his name so important to him? What does it symbolize? What is lost if it is taken away from him? Do you feel the same way about your name and/or reputation?

3. Giles Corey maintains his innocence, even as he is crushed to death. Is there a cause that you would defend as earnestly, demanding "more weight" rather than offering a false confession? What is it, and why?

4. Does John Proctor receive a fair trial? Does he deserve his ultimate fate? What is the lesson we can learn from him?

5. What is a crucible? Why do you think Miller named his play *The Crucible?* What would you have named it and why?

6. If you have read Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter,* compare the treatment of Hester Prynne with that of the accused in Miller's play. How is Puritanism portrayed in each of these works? What are the similarities and differences in these two fictional portrayals of colonial life in early America?

Michael Stewart Allen as John Proctor
Photo by John David Pittman

"I speak my own sins;
I cannot judge another."
- John Proctor

# AFTER THE PLAY

## Questions for Discussion or Writing

1. Act Two, Scene Two (in which Proctor confronts Abigail in the woods) is an optional scene that is often excised from productions. How do you think that cutting this scene might imact a production? What does this scene tell us about the characters and the themes of the play?

2. One of the issues in *The Crucible* that speaks to contemporary students is the destructive nature of bullying and peer pressure. How does bullying play a role in the way that the girls of the village get caught up in the "witch craze"? How do you confront bullying and peer pressure in your school? Do you see adults bullying other adults or caving in to peer pressure? How does that impact our society? What more could be done to prevent bullying?

3. Read Arthur Miller's essay "Why I Wrote *The Crucible*" (Appendix 1 of the Study Guide) and discuss whether you feel he achieved his goals or not. Do you think the play stands on its own, outside of the context of HUAC and the "Red Scare"? If so, to what other topics in current events and culture does the play relate? Do you feel it relates to you on a personal level, and if so, how?

4. Read Arthur Miller's essay "Tragedy and the Common Man" (Appendix 2 of the Study Guide). While this essay pertains most directly to the protagonists of *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*, it addresses the struggles faced by many of Miller's common-man heroes. How do John Proctor, Elizabeth Proctor, Rev. Hale, Giles Corey, and Rebecca Nurse fit into the heroic character patterns described by Miller in this essay? Do any other characters in the play fit this description of the tragic hero?

5. How does gender play a role in the politics and drama of *The Crucible*? How are men and women treated differently, and how do they treat each other? The word "hysteria" itself has a gendered origin/etymology. How does Miller use that in this play?

Stephanie Lambourn as Mary Warren and Gracyn Mix as Abigail Williams in The Rep's production of *The Crucible*.
Photo by John David Pittman

# ACTIVITIES

1. Have each student visit National Geographic's online "witch trial" simulation at http://nationalgeographic.org/interactive/salem-interactive/. Have them write down the results and present to the class whether they were convicted or acquitted, and why. Have them analyze the statistical percentages of how many in the class would have been convicted in 1692 Salem.

2. Have students look through newspapers and news magazines for the past month or so, focusing on election coverage (national and local). Tell them to write down each reference to a "witch hunt" that they find and to inquire what each instance refers to. Break into groups and discuss whether they think the modern-day usage of the phrase is accurate, in light of the Salem trials and the HUAC investigations.


3. Write a short story or scene from a play in which a modern-day "witch hunt" occurs at your school, church, etc.

Michael Stewart Allen as John Proctor in The Rep's production of *The Crucible*
Photo by John David Pittman

# VOCABULARY

The following terms are used throughout this Study Guide. This list is designed to be a central resource for educators to incorporate expanded vocabulary into your lessons related to the Arkansas Repertory Theatre production of *The Crucible*.

**1984**
**allegory**
**anarchist**
**anti-intellectual**
**avant-garde**
**ballet**
**blackface**
**blacklist**
**Brooks Atkinson**
**Classical Greek tragedy**
**Cold War**
**communist**
**Communist Revolution of 1917**
**concentration camp**
**contempt**
**crucible**
**Dalton Trumbo**
**Down syndrome**
**Drama Desk Award**
**dystopia**
**Elia Kazan**
**Elie Wiesel**
**epic**
**familiar**
**George Orwell**
**Henrik Ibsen**
**"Hollywood Ten"**
**House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)**
**hysteria**
**Jean-Paul Sartre**
**jingoism**
**Konstantin Stanislavsky**
**Lee Strasberg**
**Marilyn Monroe**
**Method Acting**
**Modern drama**
**Naturalism**
**opera**
**propaganda**
**Pulitzer Prize**
**Puritan**
**Red Scare**
**revival**
**Roy Cohn**
**Salem**
**Salem Witch Trials of 1692**
**screenplay**
**Sen. Joseph McCarthy**
**spectral evidence**
**"straight play"**
**thoughtcrime**
**Tony Award**
**totalitarian**
**Wall Street Crash of 1929**
**witch hunt**
**The Wooster Group**

# Our Story

Founded in 1976, Arkansas Repertory Theatre is the state's largest not-for-profit professional resident theatre company. A member of the League of Resident Theatres, The Rep has produced more than 300 productions including 40 world premieres in its 377-seat MainStage located in the historic Galloway building in downtown Little Rock. The Rep relies on income from season subscriptions, special events, foundation support, corporate and individual donations, and national grants, including Shakespeare in American Communities, The Shubert Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

# Our Mission

The mission of The Rep's Education Department is to engage Arkansas students of all ages, encouraging expression, collaboration, creative problem-solving, reflection, and a deeper community connection through involvement in theatre arts. Our mission is manifested through student matinees, year-round classes and camps led by our professional faculty, master classes and workshops with guest artists, outreach education, scholarship opportunities and more.

# Contact Information

For questions or comments concerning this production of *The Crucible* or Arkansas Repertory Theatre, contact our offices at (501) 378-0445.
Additional information may also be found at TheRep.org.
The Box Office may be reached at (501) 378-0405.

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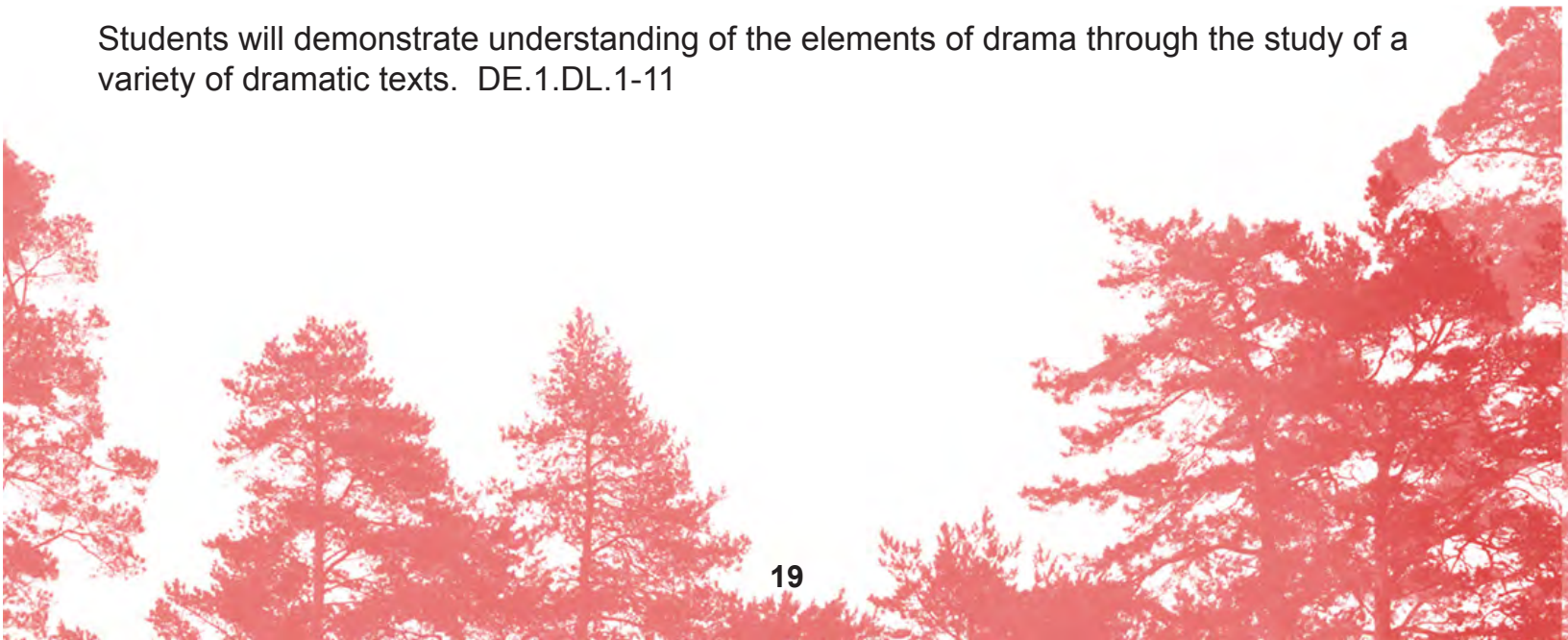
ARKANSAS FINE ARTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK 2014

Students will perceive and analyze artistic work. R.7.THI.1-5, R.7.THII.1-5, R.7.THIII.1-5:
Students will interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. R.8.THI.1-2, R.8.THII.1-2, R.8.THIII.1-2
Students will apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. R.9.THI.1-2, R.9.THII.1-2, R.9.THIII.1-2
Students will perceive and analyze artistic work. R.7.TA.1-4
Students will interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. R.8.TA.1-2
Students will apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. R.9.TA.1-2
Students will relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding. CN.11.TA.2-9
Students will perceive and analyze artistic work. R.7.SCI.1-2, R.7.SCII.1-2, R.7.SCIII.1-2
Students will interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. R.8.SCI.1, R.8.SCII.1, R.8.SCIII.1
Students will apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. R.9.SCI.1-2, R.9.SCII.1-2, R.9.SCIII.1-2
Students will relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding. CN.11.SCI.1-9, CN.11.SCII.1-9, CN.11.SCIII.1-9
Students will perceive and analyze artistic work. R.7.2.1, R.7.3.1, R.7.4.1
Students will interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. R.8.2.1-3, R.8.3.1-3, R.8.4.1-3
Students will apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. R.9.2.1, R.9.1.1, R.9.2.1-3, R.9.3.1-3, R.9.4.1-3
Students will perceive and analyze artistic work. R.7.5.1, R.7.6.1, R.7.7.1, R.7.8.1
Students will interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. R.8.5.1-3, R.8.6.1-3, R.8.7.1-3, R.8.8.1-3
Students will apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. R.9.5.1-3, R.9.6.1-3, R.9.7.1-3, R.9.8.1-3
Students will synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. CN.10.5.1, CN.10.6.1, CN.10.7.1, CN.10.8.1
Students will relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding. CN.11.5.2-3, CN.11.6.2-3, CN.11.7.2-3, CN.11.7.2-3, CN.10.8.2-3

ARKANSAS DRAMATIC LITERATURE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK 2012

Students will demonstrate understanding of the elements of drama through the study of a variety of dramatic texts. DE.1.DL.1-11



# APPENDIX 1:

## "Why I Wrote The Crucible: An Artist's Answer to Politics" by Arthur Miller

The New Yorker, October 21, 1996

As I watched *The Crucible* taking shape as a movie over much of the past year, the sheer depth of time that it represents for me kept returning to mind. As those powerful actors blossomed on the screen, and the children and the horses, the crowds and the wagons, I thought again about how I came to cook all this up nearly fifty years ago, in an America almost nobody I know seems to remember clearly. In a way, there is a biting irony in this film's having been made by a Hollywood studio, something unimaginable in the fifties. But there they are -- Daniel Day-Lewis (John Proctor) scything his sea-bordered field, Joan Allen (Elizabeth) lying pregnant in the frigid jail, Winona Ryder (Abigail) stealing her minister-uncle's money, majestic Paul Scofield (Judge Danforth) and his righteous empathy with the Devil-possessed children, and all of them looking as inevitable as rain.

I remember those years -- they formed *The Crucible*'s skeleton -- but I have lost the dead weight of the fear I had then. Fear doesn't travel well; just as it can warp judgment, its absence can diminish memory's truth. What terrifies one generation is likely to bring only a puzzled smile to the next. I remember how in 1964, only twenty years after the war, Harold Clurman, the director of Incident at Vichy, showed the cast a film of a Hitler speech, hoping to give them a sense of the Nazi period in which my play took place. They watched as Hitler, facing a vast stadium full of adoring people, went up on his toes in ecstasy, hands clasped under his chin, a sublimely self-gratified grin on his face, his body swivelling rather cutely, and they giggled at his overacting.

Likewise, films of Senator Joseph McCarthy are rather unsettling -- if you remember the fear he once spread. Buzzing his truculent sidewalk brawler's snarl through the hairs in his nose, squinting through his cat's eyes and sneering like a villain, he comes across now as nearly comical, a self-aware performer keeping a straight face as he does his juicy threat-shtick.

McCarthy's power to stir fears of creeping Communism was not entirely based on illusion, of course; the paranoid, real or pretended, always secretes its pearl around a grain of fact. From being our wartime ally, the Soviet Union rapidly became a expanding empire. In 1949, Mao Zedong took power in China. Western Europe also seemed ready to become Red -- especially Italy, where the Communist Party was the largest outside Russia, and was growing. Capitalism, in the opinion of many, myself included, had nothing more to say, its final poisoned bloom having been Italian and German Fascism. McCarthy -- brash and ill-mannered but to many authentic and true -- boiled it all down to what anyone could understand: we had "lost China" and would soon lose Europe as well, because the State Department -- staffed, of course, under Democratic Presidents -- was full of treasonous pro-Soviet intellectuals. It was as simple as that.

If our losing China seemed the equivalent of a flea's losing an elephant, it was still a phrase -- and a conviction -- that one did not dare to question; to do so was to risk drawing suspicion on oneself. Indeed, the State Department proceeded to hound and fire the officers who knew China, its language, and its opaque culture -- a move that suggested the practitioners of sympathetic magic who wring the neck of a doll in order to make a distant enemy's head drop off. There was magic all around; the politics of alien conspiracy soon dominated political discourse and bid fair to wipe out any other issue. How could one deal with such enormities in a play?

*The Crucible* was an act of desperation. Much of my desperation branched out, I suppose, from a typical Depression -- era trauma -- the blow struck on the mind by the rise of European Fascism and the brutal anti-Semitism it had brought to power. But by 1950, when I began to think of writing about the hunt for Reds in America, I was motivated in some great part by the paralysis that had set in among many liberals who, despite their discomfort with the inquisitors' violations of civil rights, were fearful, and with good reason, of being identified as covert Communists if they should protest too strongly.

In any play, however trivial, there has to be a still point of moral reference against which to gauge the action. In our lives, in the late nineteen-forties and early nineteen-fifties, no such point existed anymore. The left could not look straight at the Soviet Union's abrogations of human rights. The anti-Communist liberals could not acknowledge the violations of those rights by congressional committees. The far right, meanwhile, was licking up all the cream. The days of "J'accuse" were gone, for anyone needs to feel right to declare someone else wrong. Gradually, all the old political and moral reality had melted like a Dali watch. Nobody but a fanatic, it seemed, could really say all that he believed.

President Truman was among the first to have to deal with the dilemma, and his way of resolving itself having to trim his sails before the howling gale on the right-turned out to be momentous. At first, he was outraged at the allegation of widespread Communist infiltration of the government and called the charge of "coddling Communists" a red herring dragged in by the Republicans to bring down the Democrats. But such was the gathering power of raw belief in the great Soviet plot that Truman soon felt it necessary to institute loyalty boards of his own.

The Red hunt, led by the House Committee on Un-American Activities and by McCarthy, was becoming the dominating fixation of the American psyche. It reached Hollywood when the studios, after first resisting, agreed to submit artists' names to the House Committee for "clearing" before employing them. This unleashed a veritable holy terror among actors, directors, and others, from Party members to those who had had the merest brush with a front organization.

The Soviet plot was the hub of a great wheel of causation; the plot justified the crushing of all nuance, all the shadings that a realistic judgment of reality requires. Even worse was the feeling that our sensitivity to this onslaught on our liberties was passing from us -- indeed, from me. In Timebends, my autobiography, I recalled the time I'd written a screenplay (The Hook) about union corruption on the Brooklyn waterfront. Harry Cohn, the head of Columbia Pictures, did something that would once have been considered unthinkable: he showed my script to the F.B.I. Cohn then asked me to take the gangsters in my script, who were threatening and murdering their opponents, and simply change them to Communists. When I declined to commit this idiocy (Joe Ryan, the head of the longshoremen's union, was soon to go to Sing Sing for racketeering), I got a wire from Cohn saying, "The minute we try to make the script pro-American you pull out." By then -- it was 1951 -- I had come to accept this terribly serious insanity as routine, but there was an element of the marvelous in it which I longed to put on the stage.

In those years, our thought processes were becoming so magical, so paranoid, that to imagine writing a play about this environment was like trying to pick one's teeth with a ball of wool: I lacked the tools to illuminate miasma. Yet I kept being drawn back to it.

I had read about the witchcraft trials in college, but it was not until I read a book published in 1867 -- a two-volume, thousand-page study by Charles W. Upham, who was then the mayor of Salem -- that I knew I had to write about the period. Upham had not only written a broad and thorough investigation of what was even then an almost lost chapter of Salem’s past but opened up to me the details of personal relationships among many participants in the tragedy.

I visited Salem for the first time on a dismal spring day in 1952; it was a sidetracked town then, with abandoned factories and vacant stores. In the gloomy courthouse there I read the transcripts of the witchcraft trials of 1692, as taken down in a primitive shorthand by ministers who were spelling each other. But there was one entry in Upham in which the thousands of pieces I had come across were jogged into place. It was from a report written by the Reverend Samuel Parris, who was one of the chief instigators of the witch-hunt. “During the examination of Elizabeth Procter, Abigail Williams and Ann Putnam” -- the two were “afflicted” teen-age accusers, and Abigail was Parris’s niece -- “both made offer to strike at said Procter; but when Abigail’s hand came near, it opened, whereas it was made up, into a fist before, and came down exceeding lightly as it drew near to said Procter, and at length, with open and extended fingers, touched Procter’s hood very lightly. Immediately Abigail cried out her fingers, her fingers, her fingers burned... “

In this remarkably observed gesture of a troubled young girl, I believed, a play became possible. Elizabeth Proctor had been the orphaned Abigail's mistress, and they had lived together in the same small house until Elizabeth fired the girl. By this time, I was sure, John Proctor had bedded Abigail, who had to be dismissed most likely to appease Elizabeth. There was bad blood between the two women now. That Abigail started, in effect, to condemn Elizabeth to death with her touch, then stopped her hand, then went through with it, was quite suddenly the human center of all this turmoil.

All this I understood. I had not approached the witchcraft out of nowhere or from purely social and political considerations. My own marriage of twelve years was teetering and I knew more than I wished to know about where the blame lay. That John Proctor the sinner might overturn his paralyzing personal guilt and become the most forthright voice against the madness around him was a reassurance to me, and, I suppose, an inspiration: it demonstrated that a clear moral outcry could still spring even from an ambiguously unblemished soul. Moving crabwise across the profusion of evidence, I sensed that I had at last found something of myself in it, and a play began to accumulate around this man.

But as the dramatic form became visible, one problem remained unyielding: so many practices of the Salem trials were similar to those employed by the congressional committees that I could easily be accused of skewing history for a mere partisan purpose. Inevitably, it was no sooner known that my new play was about Salem than I had to confront the charge that such an analogy was specious -- that there never were any witches but there certainly are Communists. In the seventeenth century, however, the existence of witches was never questioned by the loftiest minds in Europe and America; and even lawyers of the highest eminence, like Sir Edward Coke, a veritable hero of liberty for defending the common law against the king's arbitrary power, believed that witches had to be prosecuted mercilessly. Of course, there were no Communists in 1692, but it was literally worth your life to deny witches or their powers, given the exhortation in the Bible, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." There had to be witches in the world or the Bible lied. Indeed, the very structure of evil depended on Lucifer's plotting against God. (And the irony is that klatches of Luciferians exist all over the country today, there may even be more of them now than there are Communists.)

As with most humans, panic sleeps in one unlighted corner of my soul. When I walked at night along the empty, wet streets of Salem in the week that I spent there, I could easily work myself into imagining my terror before a gaggle of young girls flying down the road screaming that somebody's "familiar spirit" was chasing them. This anxiety-laden leap backward over nearly three centuries may have been helped along by a particular Upham footnote. At a certain point, the high court of the province made the fatal decision to admit, for the first time, the use of "spectral evidence" as proof of guilt. Spectral evidence, so aptly named, meant that if I swore that you had sent out your "familiar spirit" to choke, tickle, poison me or my cattle, or to control thoughts and actions, I could get you hanged unless you confessed to having had contact with the Devil. After all, only the Devil could lend such powers of visible transport to confederates, in his everlasting plot to bring down Christianity.

Naturally, the best proof of the sincerity of your confession was your naming others whom you had seen in the Devil company -- an invitation to private vengeance, but made official by the seal of the theocratic state. It was as though the court had grown tired of thinking and had invited in the instincts: spectral evidence -- that poisoned cloud of paranoid fantasy -- made a kind of lunatic sense to them, as it did in plot-ridden 1952, when so often the question was not the acts of an accused but the thoughts and intentions in his alienated mind.

The breathtaking circularity of the process had a kind of poetic tightness. Not everybody was accused, after all, so there must be some reason why you were. By denying that there is any reason whatsoever for you to be accused, you are implying, by virtue of a surprisingly small logical leap, that mere chance picked you out, which in turn implies that the Devil might not really be at work in the village or, God forbid, even exist. Therefore, the investigation itself is either mistaken or a fraud. You would have to be a crypto-Luciferian to say that -- not a great idea if I you wanted to go back to your farm.

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. Apparently, certain processes are universal. When Gentiles in Hitler's Germany, for example, saw their Jewish neighbors being trucked off, or rs in Soviet Ukraine saw the Kulaks sing before their eyes, the common reaction, even among those unsympathetic to Nazism or Communism, was quite naturally to turn away in fear of being identified with the condemned. As I learned from non-Jewish refugees, however there was often a despairing pity mixed with "Well, they must have done something." Few of us can easily surrender our belief that society must somehow make sense. The thought that the state has lost its mind and is punishing so many innocent people is intolerable. And so the evidence has to be internally denied.

I was also drawn into writing *The Crucible* by the chance it gave me to use a new language -- that of seventeenth-century New England. That plain, craggy English was liberating in a strangely sensuous way, with its swings from an almost legalistic precision to a wonderful metaphoric richness. "The Lord doth terrible things amongst us, by lengthening the chain of the roaring lion in an extraordinary manner, so that the Devil is come down in great wrath," Deodat Lawson, one of the great witch-hunting preachers, said in a sermon. Lawson rallied his congregation for what was to be nothing less than a religious war against the Evil One -- "Arm, arm, arm!" -- and his concealed anti-Christian accomplices.

But it was not yet my language, and among other strategies to make it mine I enlisted the help of a former University of Michigan classmate, the Greek-American scholar and poet Kimon Friar. (He later translated Kazantzakis.) The problem was not to imitate the archaic speech but to try to create a new echo of it which would flow freely off American actors' tongues. As in the film, nearly fifty years later, the actors in the first production grabbed the language and ran with it as happily as if it were their customary speech.

*The Crucible* took me about a year to write. With its five sets and a cast of twenty-one, it never occurred to me that it would take a brave man to produce it on Broadway, especially given the prevailing climate, but Kermit Bloomgarden never faltered. Well before the play opened, a strange tension had begun to build. Only two years earlier, the *Death of a Salesman* touring company had played to a thin crowd in Peoria, Illinois, having been boycotted nearly to death by the American Legion and the Jaycees. Before that, the Catholic War Veterans had prevailed upon the Army not to allow its theatrical groups to perform, first, *All My Sons*, and then any play of mine, in occupied Europe. The Dramatists Guild refused to protest attacks on a new play by Sean O'Casey, a self-declared Communist, which forced its producer to cancel his option. I knew of two suicides by actors depressed by upcoming investigation, and every day seemed to bring news of people exiling themselves to Europe: Charlie Chaplin, the director Joseph Losey, Jules Dassin, the harmonica virtuoso Larry Adler, Donald Ogden Stewart, one of the most sought-after screenwriters in Hollywood, and Sam Wanamaker, who would lead the successful campaign to rebuild the Old Globe Theatre on the Thames.

On opening night, January 22, 1953, I knew that the atmosphere would be pretty hostile. The coldness of the crowd was not a surprise; Broadway audiences were not famous for loving history lessons, which is what they made of the play. It seems to me entirely appropriate that on the day the play opened, a newspaper headline read “ALL 13 REDS GUILTY” -- a story about American Communists who faced prison for “conspiring to teach and advocate the duty and necessity of forcible overthrow of government.” Meanwhile, the remoteness of the production was guaranteed by the director, Jed Harris, who insisted that this was a classic requiring the actors to face front, never each other. The critics were not swept away. “Arthur Miller is a problem playwright in both senses of the word,” wrote Walter Kerr of the Herald Tribune, who called the play “a step backward into mechanical parable.” The Times was not much kinder, saying, “There is too much excitement and not enough emotion in *The Crucible*.” But the play’s future would turn out quite differently.

About a year later, a new production, one with younger, less accomplished actors, working in the Martinique Hotel ballroom, played with the fervor that the script and the times required, and *The Crucible* became a hit. The play stumbled into history, and today, I am told, it is one of the most heavily demanded trade-fiction paperbacks in this country; the Bantam and Penguin editions have sold more than six million copies. I don't think there has been a week in the past forty-odd years when it hasn't been on a stage somewhere in the world. Nor is the new screen version the first. Jean-Paul Sartre, in his Marxist phase, wrote a French film adaptation that blamed the tragedy on the rich landowners conspiring to persecute the poor. (In truth, most of those who were hanged in Salem were people of substance, and two or three were very large landowners.)

It is only a slight exaggeration to say that, especially in Latin America, *The Crucible* starts getting produced wherever a political coup appears imminent, or a dictatorial regime has just been over-thrown. From Argentina to Chile to Greece, Czechoslovakia, China, and a dozen other places, the play seems to present the same primeval structure of human sacrifice to the furies of fanaticism and paranoia that goes on repeating itself forever as though imbedded in the brain of social man.

I am not sure what *The Crucible* is telling people now, but I know that its paranoid center is still pumping out the same darkly attractive warning that it did in the fifties. For some, the play seems to be about the dilemma of relying on the testimony of small children accusing adults of sexual abuse, something I'd not have dreamed of forty years ago. For others, it may simply be a fascination with the outbreak of paranoia that suffuses the play -- the blind panic that, in our age, often seems to sit at the dim edges of consciousness. Certainly its political implications are the central issue for many people; the Salem interrogations turn out to be eerily exact models of those yet to come in Stalin's Russia, Pinochet's Chile, Mao's China, and other regimes. (Nien Cheng, the author of "Life and Death in Shang- hai," has told me that she could hardly believe that a non-Chinese -- someone who had not experienced the Cultural Revolution -- had written the play.) But below its concerns with justice the play evokes a lethal brew of illicit sexuality, fear of the supernatural, and political manipulation, a combination not unfamiliar these days. The film, by reaching the broad American audience as no play ever can, may well unearth still other connections to those buried public terrors that Salem first announced on this continent.

One thing more -- something wonderful in the old sense of that word. I recall the weeks I spent reading testimony by the tome, commentaries, broadsides, confessions, and accusations. And always the crucial damning event was the signing of one's name in "the Devil's book." This Faustian agreement to hand over one's soul to the dreaded Lord of Darkness was the ultimate insult to God. But what were these new inductees supposed to have done once they'd signed on? Nobody seems even to have thought to ask. But, of course, actions are as irrelevant during cultural and religious wars as they are in nightmares. The thing at issue is buried intentions -- the secret allegiances of the alienated hearts always the main threat to the theocratic mind, as well as its immemorial quarry.

# APPENDIX 2:

## "Tragedy and the Common Man"
## by Arthur Miller
The New York Times, February 27, 1949

In this age few tragedies are written. It has often been held that the lack is due to a paucity of heroes among us, or else that modern man has had the blood drawn out of his organs of belief by the skepticism of science, and the heroic attack on life cannot feed on an attitude of reserve and circumspection. For one reason or another, we are often held to be below tragedy-or tragedy above us. The inevitable conclusion is, of course, that the tragic mode is archaic, fit only for the very highly placed, the kings or the kingly, and where this admission is not made in so many words it is most often implied.

I believe that the common man is as apt a subject for tragedy in its highest sense as kings were. On the face of it this ought to be obvious in the light of modern psychiatry, which bases its analysis upon classific formulations, such as Oedipus and Orestes complexes, for instances, which were enacted by royal beings, but which apply to everyone in similar emotional situations.

More simply, when the question of tragedy in art is not at issue, we never hesitate to attribute to the well-placed and the exalted the very same mental processes as the lowly. And finally, if the exaltation of tragic action were truly a property of the high-bred character alone, it is inconceivable that the mass of mankind should cherish tragedy above all other forms, let alone be capable of understanding it.

As a general rule, to which there may be exceptions unknown to me, I think the tragic feeling is evoked in us when we are in the presence of a character who is ready to lay down his life, if need be, to secure one thing-his sense of personal dignity. From Orestes to Hamlet, Medea to Macbeth, the underlying struggle is that of the individual attempting to gain his "rightful" position in his society.

Sometimes he is one who has been displaced from it, sometimes one who seeks t attain it for the first time, but the fateful wound from which the inevitable events spiral is the wound of indignity and its dominant force is indignation. Tragedy, then, is the consequence of a man's total compulsion to evaluate himself justly.

In the sense of having been initiated by the hero himself, the tale always reveals what has been called his "tragic flaw," a failing that is not peculiar to grand or elevated characters. Nor is it necessarily a weakness. The flaw, or crack in the characters, is really nothing-and need be nothing, but his inherent unwillingness to remain passive in the face of what he conceives to be a challenge to his dignity, his image of his rightful status. Only the passive, only those who accept their lot without active retaliation, are "flawless." Most of us are in that category.

But there are among us today, as there always have been, those who act against the scheme of things that degrades them, and in the process of action everything we have accepted out of fear of insensitivity or ignorance is shaken before us and examined, and from this total onslaught by an individual against the seemingly stable cosmos surrounding us-from this total examination of the "unchangeable" environment-comes the terror and the fear that is classically associated with tragedy. More important, from this total questioning of what has previously been unquestioned, we learn. And such a process is not beyond the common man. In revolutions around the world, these past thirty years, he has demonstrated again and again this inner dynamic of all tragedy.

Insistence upon the rank of the tragic hero, or the so-called nobility of his character, is really but a clinging to the outward forms of tragedy. If rank or nobility of character was indispensable, then it would follow that the problems of those with rank were the particular problems of tragedy. But surely the right of one monarch to capture the domain from another no longer raises our passions, nor are our concepts of justice what they were to the mind of an Elizabethan king.

The quality in such plays that does shake us, however, derives from the underlying fear of being displaced, the disaster inherent in being torn away from our chosen image of what and who we are in this world. Among us today this fear is strong, and perhaps stronger, than it ever was. In fact, it is the common man who knows this fear best.

Now, if it is true that tragedy is the consequence of a man's total compulsion to evaluate himself justly, his destruction in the attempt posits a wrong or an evil in his environment. And this is precisely the morality of tragedy and its lesson. The discovery of the moral law, which is what the enlightenment of tragedy consists of, is not the discovery of some abstract or metaphysical quantity.

The tragic right is a condition of life, a condition in which the human personality is able to flower and realize itself. The wrong is the condition which suppresses man, perverts the flowing out of his love and creative instinct. Tragedy enlightens-and it must, in that it points the heroic finger at the enemy of man's freedom. The thrust for freedom is the quality in tragedy which exalts. The revolutionary questioning of the stable environment is what terrifies. In no way is the common man debarred from such thoughts or such actions.

Seen in this light, our lack of tragedy may be partially accounted for by the turn which modern literature has taken toward the purely psychiatric view of life, or the purely sociological. If all our miseries, our indignities, are born and bred within our minds, then all action, let alone the heroic action, is obviously impossible.

And if society alone is responsible for the cramping of our lives, then the protagonist must needs be so pure and faultless as to force us to deny his validity as a character. From neither of these views can tragedy derive, simply because neither represents a balanced concept of life. Above all else, tragedy requires the finest appreciation by the writer of cause and effect.

No tragedy can therefore come about when its author fears to question absolutely everything, when he regards any institution, habit or custom as being either everlasting, immutable or inevitable. In the tragic view the need of man to wholly realize himself is the only fixed star, and whatever it is that hedges his nature and lowers it is ripe for attack and examination. Which is not to say that tragedy must preach revolution.

The Greeks could probe the very heavenly origin of their ways and return to confirm the rightness of laws. And Job could face God in anger, demanding his right and end in submission. But for a moment everything is in suspension, nothing is accepted, and in this sketching and tearing apart of the cosmos, in the very action of so doing, the character gains “size,” the tragic stature which is spuriously attached to the royal or the high born in our minds. The commonest of men may take on that stature to the extent of his willingness to throw all he has into the contest, the battle to secure his rightful place in the world.

There is a misconception of tragedy with which I have been struck in review after review, and in many conversations with writers and readers alike. It is the idea that tragedy is of necessity allied to pessimism. Even the dictionary says nothing more about the word than that it means a story with a sad or unhappy ending. This impression is so firmly fixed that I almost hesitate to claim that in truth tragedy implies more optimism in its author than does comedy, and that its final result ought to be the reinforcement of the onlooker’s brightest opinions of the human animal.

For, if it is true to say that in essence the tragic hero is intent upon claiming his whole due as a personality, and if this struggle must be total and without reservation, then it automatically demonstrates the indestructible will of man to achieve his humanity.

The possibility of victory must be there in tragedy. Where pathos rules, where pathos is finally derived, a character has fought a battle he could not possibly have won. The pathetic is achieved when the protagonist is, by virtue of his witlessness, his insensitivity, or the very air he gives off, incapable of grappling with a much superior force.

Pathos truly is the mode for the pessimist. But tragedy requires a nicer balance between what is possible and what is impossible. And it is curious, although edifying, that the plays we revere, century after century, are the tragedies. In them, and in them alone, lies the belief-optimistic, if you will, in the perfectibility of man.

It is time, I think, that we who are without kings, took up this bright thread of our history and followed it to the only place it can possibly lead in our time-the heart and spirit of the average man.