Performance Guidebook

2018-19 SEASON
for
Young People

The Crucible
National Players

presented by Regions & Tennessee Performing Arts Center
For 135 years Regions has been proud to be a part of the Middle Tennessee community, growing and thriving as our region has. From the opening of our doors on September 1, 1883, we have committed to this community and our customers.

One area that we are strongly committed to is the education of our students. We are proud to sponsor TPAC’s Humanities Outreach in Tennessee (HOT). What an important program this is – reaching over 30,000 students, many of whom would never get to see a performing arts production without this local resource. Regions continues to reinforce its commitment to the communities it serves, and in addition to supporting programs such as HOT, we have close to 200 associates teaching financial literacy in classrooms this year.

Thank you, teachers,

for giving your students this wonderful experience. You are creating memories of a lifetime, and Regions is proud to be able to help make this opportunity possible.
Dear Teachers,

Thank you for bringing your students to see Arthur Miller’s THE CRUCIBLE performed by National Players at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center.

Olney Theatre, the home of National Players, has created an outstanding guide to the performance and we are grateful to share their materials with you.

In the guide you will find relevant historical background and analysis, as well as classroom activities that will support you in connecting students with the play and its cultural and historical themes.

Thank you also to our many donors and sponsors. With their support, we can make this performance available and accessible to students in Tennessee as part of our Season for Young People.

We look forward to seeing you at the theater!

--TPAC Education

Mercy Lewis (Alanna McNaughton) and Abigail Williams (Jamie Boller) spellbound in the National Players Tour 70 touring production of The Crucible.

C. Stanley Photography
A Note from the Director

In his masterpiece examination of collective hysteria, The Crucible, Arthur Miller evokes an entire community bound together by fear—fear of the unknown, of the other, of God’s retribution, of the people beyond their borders whose lands they took three generations ago, of the people within their border who want to take their land now. In Arthur Miller’s Salem, Massachusetts in 1692, fear was the glue that kept the group whole, and fear would be used to tear the community apart. This population united by fear echoes in the 1950s when McCarthyism reigned over the US Congress’ House on Un-American Activities Committee and Hollywood. As in Salem, Fear of Others morphed into dread that even the most innocent might be named an enemy by a trusted friend or total stranger, prompting Arthur Miller to write a play, calling out those using terror and suspicion for their own gain by using the Salem Witch Trials to reflect the McCarthy Trials.

Miller tells the story of an entire community by focusing on John Proctor, his wife, Elizabeth, and Abigail Williams, the teenager who led the accusations and loved the once-affectionate John Proctor. National Players embraces the challenge of rendering the full community of Miller’s Salem with its ten-person ensemble. By limiting the cast to only ten people, individual actors will be playing both accusers and accused, children and adults; this juxtaposition in casting will allow audiences to see more vividly how the power in this community shifts as the story unfolds. Additionally, National Players has a 70-year history of telling big stories with limited but creatively utilized props, costumes and set pieces. Creativity through limitation is a hallmark approach to National Players aesthetic. Character, story, and language are the chief priorities of any story we tell. Utilizing our signature theatrical style and no-frills theatrical approach, National Players will honor Miller’s masterful dialogue, intense drama, and complex characters to boldly tell a story that is as relevant today as it was seven decades ago.

-Jason King Jones
Artistic Director of National Players
Celebrating its 70th season, National Players is a unique ensemble bringing innovative theater to communities large and small across the United States. Founded in 1949, National Players stimulates youthful imagination and critical thinking by presenting classic plays in invigorating ways for modern audiences by performing three plays in repertory with a ten-person ensemble.

National Players is the hallmark outreach program of Olney Theatre Center, a Helen Hayes Award-winning theatre in suburban Washington, DC. A model for artistic collaboration and national education outreach, National Players embodies the Olney Theatre Center educational pedagogy: to unleash the creative potential in our audiences and artists and to stimulate individual empowerment. National Players exemplifies these goals by presenting self-sustained productions of Shakespeare and other classics to learners of all ages and in all environments. Through performances and integrated educational programs, National Players empowers these learners to build stronger communities through artistic collaboration.

**National Players’ Production of *The Crucible***

No one is safe as a reign of terror rips through 1692 Salem. Led by Abigail Williams, a group of girls who claim to have seen the Devil hurl out charges of witchcraft, sending those who won’t confess to the noose. When the accusing finger points to his wife, John Proctor is forced to confront his past and determine his future.

Arthur Miller’s searing drama, inspired by the McCarthy era, comes to vivid new life in the National Players’ bare-knuckle staging. A piercing look at what can happen when truth is bent to political convenience, *The Crucible* is a powerful story for our time.

Judge Danforth (Alice Kabia, left), Judge Hathorne (Jamie Boller, right), and Reverend Parris (Benjamin DeCamp Cole, center) examine the testimony of citizens of Salem. C. Stanley Photography
Special Thanks

Tennessee Performing Arts Center’s nonprofit mission is to lead with excellence in the performing arts and arts education, creating meaningful and relevant experiences to enrich lives, strengthen communities, and support economic vitality. TPAC Education is funded solely by generous contributions, sponsorships, and in-kind gifts from our partners.

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Cover photo by Stan Barouh
Arthur Miller

Career:
Arguably the most well-known American playwright, Arthur Miller is perhaps most remembered for *All My Sons*, *The Crucible*, and *Death of a Salesman*, which swept the Tony Awards and was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in Drama when it premiered in 1949. In addition to his many plays, Miller also wrote novels and a series of screenplays. His work deals with American themes: the American Dream (as in the case of *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*), modern politics (*The Crucible*), and masculinity (*All My Sons*, *A View from the Bridge*).

He started writing plays while enrolled at the University of Michigan and was awarded the school’s Avery Hopwood Award for his first play, *No Villain*. He made his Broadway debut, *The Man Who Had All the Luck*, in 1944, but it closed after just four performances. His first novel, *Focus*, was published later that year.

When *All My Sons* opened in 1947, it was a hit and ran for almost a full year; it also earned him his first Tony Award for Best Author, an award he’d win again for *Death of a Salesman* in 1949. Salesman won five other Tonys that year, including Best Play, and the Pulitzer Prize. He’d follow that up with *The Crucible* in 1953, at which point he began to split his focus between theatre and film, with plays like *A View from the Bridge* (1955) and *Incident at Vichy* (1964), and films like *The Misfits* (1961) and the screenplay for *The Crucible* (1996).

Personal Life:
Arthur Miller spent much of his life in the public eye, often surrounding himself with other celebrity-types: Daniel Day-Lewis married his daughter (and later starred in the 1996 film version of *The Crucible*) and his fiancé at the time of his death was a well-known painter, for instance, though his most famous connection with his ex-wife, Marilyn Monroe. Miller’s relationship with Monroe is the source of much controversy, as examined in “Him Too? How Arthur Miller Smeared Marilyn Monroe and Invented the Myth of the Male Witch Hunt,” an article by Maria Dahvana Headley of *The Daily Beast*. The relationship began while Monroe was having an affair with Elia Kazan, a director with whom Miller had worked closely. Monroe and Miller met at a party in 1951 and were married in 1956, just months after Miller divorced his first wife with whom he had two children; at that time, Miller said in an interview that Monroe would curtail her movie career for the “full time job” of being his wife. In fact, neither of them worked particularly hard during their four year marriage. This is in part due to Miller’s involvement with the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), spearheaded by Joseph McCarthy: Miller was called in to appear before them for questioning about his allegorical play, *The Crucible*, which critiqued the work and the “witch hunt” HUAC created. Still, Miller only wrote one thing during his marriage to Monroe: the screenplay for *The Misfits*, a gift for Monroe, who starred in it in 1961, around the same time of their divorce. She died a year later.

Miller’s work changes tone dramatically after Monroe’s death. His 1964 play, *After the Fall*, tells the story of Maggie, an inarticulate, drug-addicted woman, who seduces Quentin out of his marriage. Their relationship ultimately falls apart, no matter Quentin’s valiant efforts to save her, and Maggie commits suicide. In short, Miller created a play in which he rewrote the narrative of his failed marriage to make himself the hero, a story he continues in his last play, *Finishing the Picture*, which tells the story of a silent sex-symbol, Kitty, who spends most of the play nearly comatose in bed and says not a word, as the rest of the cast talks about how to handle her.
Miller married Austrian-born photographer Inge Morath in 1962 and had two children with her; his daughter Rebecca married Daniel Day-Lewis, though his son, Daniel, was born with Down syndrome and Miller had him institutionalized. Miller and his son eventually did make contact, when Daniel was an adult and had established a happy life. Morath died in 2002 and Miller soon became engaged to 34 year-old minimalist painter Agnes Barley. However, before they could wed, Miller died of heart failure, in 2005.

Notable Works:

*All My Sons* – All My Sons opened on Broadway at the Coronet Theatre in 1947, directed by Elia Kazan. From Dramatists Play Service: “During the war Joe Keller and Steve Deever ran a machine shop which made airplane parts. Deever was sent to prison because the firm turned out defective parts, causing the deaths of many men. Keller went free and made a lot of money. The twin shadows of this catastrophe and the fact that the young Keller son was reported missing during the war dominate the action. The love affair of Chris Keller and Ann Deever, the bitterness of George Deever returned from the war to find his father in prison and his father’s partner free, are all set in a structure of almost unbearable power. The climax showing the reaction of a son to his guilty father is fitting conclusion to a play electrifying in its intensity.”

*Death of a Salesman* – The 1949 Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winning play, *Death of a Salesman* tells the story of the last days of Willy Loman, a failing salesman, who cannot understand how he failed to win success and happiness. Through a series of tragic soul-searching revelations of the life he has lived with his wife, his sons, and his business associates, we discover how his quest for the American Dream kept him blind to the people who truly loved him.

*The Price* – Miller’s 1968 play, *The Price*, opened at the Morosco Theatre and was nominated for two Tony Awards. It has been revived on Broadway four times. As outlined in Variety: “the conflict, the basic jealousy and the lifetime of, if not hatred, at least corrosive, though unacknowledged anger, is between two brothers, as well as resentment against a selfish, child-devouring father. The siblings meet, after a sixteen-year estrangement, in the attic of the family residence, where the old furniture is to be disposed of. The first is a policeman who sacrificed his education and probably a career as a scientist to care for his ruined, invalid father. The other, who arrives late, is an eminent surgeon who walked out on the demands of family to concentrate on medicine and personal success. Miller works up to the showdown scene slowly. The policeman and his wife first talk of the past and present to fill in some of the background. Then there is a very long, richly amusing, curiously revealing and enjoyable scene between the officer and a marvelously crotchety, humorous and wise old Jewish dealer who has come to buy the furniture but refuses to set a price without prolonged philosophic conversation. When the surgeon arrives, the brothers take a little time for amenities and feeling each other out before the basis of their long alienation and mutual bitterness emerges into short, blunt, enraged accusations. It is a taut, exciting and superbly theatrical scene, and it reveals the characters, including strengths and weaknesses, of the brothers to each other and themselves—as well as to the audience.”
McCarthyism and the House Un-American Activities Committee

In 1938, the House Un-American Activities Committee was created to investigate alleged disloyalty and subversive activities on the part of private citizens, public employees, and potential Communist ties. Hoping to apprehend Communists and Communist sympathizers, HUAC was known to pressure witnesses to surrender names via subpoenas and hold people in contempt of Congress. Witnesses who refused to comply were labeled as “red,” and their tactics of harassment were labeled “red baiting;” these created the term “Red Scare,” which refers to the fear of communism and the fear of the HUAC hearings.

A notable figure in HUAC was Senator Joseph McCarthy, for whom the term “McCarthyism” is coined. McCarthyism refers to a leader who is reckless, demagogic, and provides unsubstantiated accusations and public attacks on character. McCarthy’s tenure as Senator was unremarkable until 1950, when he said that he had a list of Communist Party members in the State Department; this prompted a meteoric rise in fame and he became the face of the Red Scare. He’d accuse politicians, government officials, and even those outside the political sphere of being a communist, a communist sympathizer, disloyal to the government, or even a homosexual – running concurrent to the Red Scare was a similar “Lavender Scare,” a fear of homosexuals or being accused of being such – often without grounds for doing so.

Artists were particularly guilty, in HUAC and McCarthy’s collective mind, with Lillian Hellman, Lena Horne, Paul Robeson, Elia Kazan, Aaron Coplan, Charlie Chaplin, and Leonard Bernstein called in front of the committee. 320 artists were blacklisted from being able to produce work in the United States, effectively ending the career of many of these artists.

One artist who managed to make it out predominantly unscathed was Arthur Miller. *The Crucible*, which opened on Broadway in 1953, was an allegorical play comparing the Red Scare and HUAC to the Salem Witch Trials; this criticism of the movement was enough to accuse Miller of communist sympathy. Miller refused to name names, however, saying, “I could not use the name of another person and bring trouble on him.” Miller, when asked why the Communist Party had produced one of his plays, famously responded, “I take no more responsibility for who plays my plays than General Motors can take for who rides in their Chevrolets.” Miller was declared guilty of contempt of Congress in 1957, with a penalty of a denied passport and either a $500 fine or 30 days in jail; however, this was overturned as he was misled at the beginning of the trial.
The Crucible opened at the Martin Beck Theatre on Broadway on January 22, 1953, though Miller found this production too stylized and cold. Indeed the reviews for it were hostile, though it won the 1953 Tony Award for Best Play regardless. A year later, a new production “succeeded” that one and has since become a staple of American drama. The Broadway production featured Madeleine Sherwood as Abigail Williams, Arthur Kennedy as John Proctor, and Beatrice Straight as Elizabeth Proctor.

It was first revived on Broadway in 2002, directed by Richard Eyre. It ran for three months and featured Liam Neeson as John Proctor, Laura Linney as Elizabeth Proctor, and Angela Bettis as Abigail Williams; Kristen Bell was also in the cast, as Susanna Wallcott, in one of her earliest roles. The production was nominated for six Tony Awards, but won none that year.

The second revival, directed by Ivo van Hove, opened in 2016 at the Walter Kerr Theatre; it featured Saoirse Ronan as Abigail Williams, Ben Whishaw as John Proctor, and Sophie Okonedo as Elizabeth Proctor. This production featured an original score by Philip Glass. It was nominated for four Tony Awards, but won none that year, though it did win a Drama Desk for Outstanding Music in a Play.

The play was also adapted for film twice, once in a made-for- TV film in 1967, and once in 1996, in an adaptation by Arthur Miller. The television movie was directed by Alex Segal and featured George C. Scott as John Proctor and Tuesday Weld as Abigail Williams. The screenplay of the film was simply the play script, where the 1996 film was edited and changed by Miller. This movie featured Daniel Day-Lewis as John Proctor, Winona Ryder as Abigail Williams, and Joan Allen as Elizabeth Proctor. The movie was nominated for two Oscars: Best Actress in a Supporting Role for Joan Allen, and Best Writing, Screenplay Based on Material Previously Produced or Published.
CHARACTERS

Reverend Parris  the minister is Salem, believes a faction plans to force him to leave Salem

Betty Parris  Parris’ daughter, she accuses individuals of practicing witchcraft

Abigail Williams  Parris’ niece, who instigates the witch trials; she used to be John Proctor’s lover

Tituba  Parris’ black slave, accused of witchcraft

Ann Putnam  a townsperson, who believes that a witch is responsible for the deaths of her seven infant children

Thomas Putnam  Ann Putnam’s husband, he systematically accuses his neighbors of witchcraft so that he might purchase their lands after they hang

Ruth Putnam  the Putnam’s daughter, another accuser

Mary Warren  the Proctor’s servant, another accuser, who later recants her story

Mercy Lewis  the Putnam’s servant, another accuser

John Proctor  a farm in Salem and former lover of Abigail, who openly denounces Parris and does not attend church, later accused of witchcraft

Elizabeth Proctor  Proctor’s wife, a decent and honest woman, accused of witchcraft

Reverend Hale  a minister in a neighboring town, summoned to help investigate Betty’s condition and witchcraft in Salem; later, he denounces the trials

Rebecca Nurse  one of the most respected individuals in Salem, falsely accused of witchcraft by Ann Putnam

Francis Nurse  Rebecca’s husband, a farmer and landowner

Susanna Walcott  a friend of Abigail, another accuser

Giles Corey  an elderly inhabitant of Salem, pressed to death in response to the trials

Sarah Good  a beggar in Salem, the first individual accused of witchcraft

Judge Hathorne  a judge in the Salem court

Deputy Governor Danforth  a special judge serving in the Salem court during the witch trials, who refuses to appear weak or irresolute

Ezekial Cheever  appointed by the court to assist in arresting accused individuals

Marshall Herrick  appointed by the court to arrest the accused individuals

Hopkins  jailer
As the play begins, Betty Parris is laying sick in bed, attended by her father, Reverend Samuel Parris. The previous evening, she had been caught dancing with her cousin Abigail, the Parris’ slave Tituba, and several other girls in the woods. Rumors have spread through the village that Betty’s illness is due to witchcraft, which brings many townspeople to the Parris’ house, including Ann Putnam, whose daughter Ruth is also afflicted. When questioned, Abigail admits that the girls were not just dancing, but also conjuring spirits.

The adults leave the room, with Abigail and two other young women, Mercy Lewis and Mary Warren, left to discuss what happened. Betty awakes and says that Abigail drank chicken blood to cast a spell to kill Elizabeth Proctor, the wife of Abigail’s former lover. Abigail threatens the girls in order to ensure their silence. That very same lover, John Proctor, then enters the house; when he is alone with Abigail, she confesses that she still loves him, but he rejects her because he has committed again to his wife.

Reverend Hale, a minister from the neighboring town of Beverly, arrives to investigate Betty’s situation; Abigail confesses that Tituba called the Devil, in part to redirect blame off herself. Tituba then confesses and the girls all throw blame on several women who they claim they’ve seen with the Devil.

The second act takes place at the Proctor’s farm, as John and Elizabeth discuss the witch trials now taking place in Salem. Though he hesitates, John is finally persuaded to go tell the court that Abigail is lying, after some tension regarding his previous affair with the younger woman. Their servant, Mary Warren, who is an “official of the court,” returns to the house and gives Elizabeth a doll she made, also revealing that Elizabeth was named a witch. Reverend Hale corroborates this story, as he arrives to question the Proctor’s faith. As he is there, Giles Corey and Francis Nurse arrive to reveal that their wives have been arrested.

Ezekial Cheever likewise arrives at the house in order to arrest Elizabeth, saying that Abigail accused her of attacking her through the same doll Mary just gave her. Though Mary tells the truth to Hale and Cheever, Elizabeth is still taken away, as John makes the claim that hypocrites are finally being punished for their sins. Following this, though sometimes deleted, there is a scene in which Proctor confronts Abigail in the woods. She insists that there is now witchcraft in the town; he tells her that he will reveal their affair if she doesn’t drop the pretense.

Act Three begins with the trial, in which Judge Hathorne is aggressively questioning Martha Corey; Giles enters to defend his wife and is dragged into another room, where he is soon joined by Deputy Governor Danforth, Parris, Hale, Francis Nurse, and Cheever. This group, after brief discussion, is similarly joined by John Proctor and Mary Warren, who reveals that the girls were faking the entire time; Proctor presents a document signed by community members willing to vouch for the characters of Elizabeth, Rebecca Nurse, and Martha Corey. Danforth demands these signers be questioned, prompting Giles Corey to testify that Thomas Putnam had Ruth make accusations in order to snatch his neighbor’s land.

Proctor reveals his affair with Abigail, who denies it; unfortunately, when Elizabeth is brought in, to defend John’s character, she does not reveal the affair, so Corey and Proctor are arrested. Hale quits the court at this display of irrationality.

The fourth act begins at the jail, as Herrick removes Tituba and Sarah Good from a jail cell in order for court officials to hold a meeting there. Danforth, Parris, and Hathorne, in their conversation, reveal that the city of Salem is in a state of unrest due to all the arrests and the hangings: Abigail and Mercy Lewis have run away, with Abigail stealing Parris’ life savings. Parris worries that hanging Rebecca Nurse and John Proctor will enhance that unrest, but neither has confessed. Hale and Elizabeth enter and try to reason with Proctor, telling him about Giles’ death for not giving any further information. John confesses, but ultimately decides against it when Danforth demands he incriminate others. With no confession, Proctor and Rebecca Nurse are taken away to the gallows.
Miller wrote *The Crucible* to directly parallel the House Un-American Activities Committee. This is especially interesting in terms of characterization. For instance, it's widely assumed that Danforth is a stand-in for Joseph McCarthy: he considers himself beyond reproach, he accuses and tries many without any substantial proof, and he tries to convince “witches” to accuse others in order to eradicate the problem. A theory exists that John Proctor is a characterization of Miller himself; though Miller had not been tried in 1953 when the play opened, he knew it was likely. Miller’s words in the trial even mirror those he wrote for Proctor: Miller said, “I could not use the name of another person and bring trouble on him” and Proctor said, “I like not to spoil their names... I speak my own sins, I cannot judge another. I have no tongue for it.” The likeliness of Miller’s self-insertion into the play is high, as an analysis of Miller’s other pieces shows several other roles which could be a characterization of himself; Quentin in *After the Fall* and Paul in *Finishing the Picture* come immediately to mind. Ironically, Miller aged Proctor down from nearly seventy to a man in his thirties for the play, though perhaps this was to smooth over his affair with Abigail Williams, a girl who in real life was only eleven.

These events, both witch-hunts in their way, were preceded by macrocosmic unrest. In the 1600s, the world was in a state of flux: citizens were leaving a global superpower (England) for new opportunities and more rights, specifically religious rights, which left England less control over them as people. Still, the new world hadn’t yet established itself in terms of a unified religion, which created tension. Even in Salem, religious differences were rife: the farmers felt isolated, especially by distance, from Salem proper, particularly Reverend Parris, whose reign as the minister of Salem was riddled with complaints from all around. He wanted more firewood than other reverends had before and a higher pay than previously dispensed. There were even those who said Parris had no right to be a reverend, as they didn’t believe he spoke for God, a disagreement which Miller immortalized through John Proctor in the play. Salem was rife with land disputes and generations-old rivalries which, in combination with the tumultuous world at large, boiled over and created a literal witch hunt.

The world Miller lived in, under the careful watch of McCarthy and HUAC, was likewise in a period of ideological opposites: the United States and the Soviet Union were fighting for their position as global superpowers. The question rang out: Is capitalism better than communism? If one thought so, he had no opportunity to show that, as any communist sympathizing was met with penalties. The unrest of the globe just before the onset of the Cold War created an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion; anyone thought of as a Communist must be reported at once, for fear that they’d report you if you didn’t beat them to it.

An image from a House Un-American Activities Committee hearing, 1953
When the settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony arrived from England, their goal was to replicate English society as closely as possible. Upon tracts of land determined by the English government, these towns established charters for governance; the charters primarily served as a business-like document, with a leader at the top and then shareholders who each received, in turn, their own tract of land. Most traveled in whole family units, rather than as individuals or indentured servants, and thus took up residence together. Most of these families took residence in the town itself, though there was about a third of the population that lived outside the town in the farming community, now known as Salem Village.

The overarching governing body was to be individually determined by the people, but, as with all British colonies, the highest governmental structure was that of England. Cities like Salem obeyed the British officials who provided them their tracts of land, such as Sir Edmund Andros, who was appointed as governor of the New England colonies in 1688. With this appointment, the English government nullified all former land titles, taking away claims to some properties and plunging the region into chaos. Colonists overthrew Andros in 1691, but the damage was done: there had been turmoil and fighting, which they knew would displease God, opening them up to the Devil’s influence.

The two Salems were dramatically different – the town was a bustling epicenter of life and housed affluent members of the community, while Salem Village was spread apart and adhered to more traditional views – but were united in one thing: regardless of the political or religious powers at play, the residents thought they should govern themselves, perhaps in large part because of the blurring of lines between church and state, which was notably more gray than in England. There was an expectation that the reverend of the area was to be its leader, both morally and politically, but Reverend Parris was newer to town than most of the residents and therefore was not respected. Indeed, he was directly in the crossfires of these two philosophies: not a natural leader, Parris assumed he’d simply be respected due to his title upon arriving in Salem, but the citizens disagreed with him on principle, knowing that neither was the other’s first choice. It was his duty to oversee the court and any civil disputes, but these were often rehashed time and time again until Parris came to the desired outcome.

The family unit in Salem then became the closest thing to an organized government; indeed, the father of the house was seen as the moral compass for the family and was in charge of ensuring daily prayer. The household included the father, the wife, and children, as well as any servants. The day would begin and end with prayer and singing of hymns and psalms, led by the father. The mother would lead the children in chores and work – play was a forbidden topic, as was most leisure activity, such as dancing – or in education. Indeed, most Puritans were taught to read, though very few had the ability to write.

In Salem and other Puritan cities, married women were not allowed to own land; their husband owned the land and they were to tend to the family while the men took care of it. Widowed women were allowed to own land, at least until their male children came of age or their female children could marry. However, even with land, women had no right to vote and therefore no political power.

With the family as the closest thing to government, any who broke from that tradition were immediately suspect. The first women accused of witchcraft, for instance, were unmarried and poor; Sarah Good was even homeless and caring for a child with no father. Indeed, the marginalized in Salem were the first to be accused: the slaves, the unmarried, the young, the elderly. Much of this springs from the European mentality that women and people of color were inherently further from God than white men, tracing back to the supposed idea of God making mankind in his image.
Looking back: reality vs. Miller’s mythology

While many of the details and facts in Miller’s play are based in fact, he did fictionalize and manipulate some of the facts. In Salem, not a lot was written down; indeed, only a portion of the population knew how to read at all. What was written down, particularly during the trials themselves, were riddled with comments and “descriptions,” rather than a word-by-word testimony; this may have been due to the noise in the room making it difficult to hear, the rapidity of the witness’ testimony, or perhaps may simply have been confirmation bias. Therefore, Miller had to invent dialogue for his characters that kept the spirit of the trials.

Miller also theatricalized several characters. Abigail Williams, in the play, is a conglomeration of the 11 year old Abigail Williams and the 14 year old Abigail Hobbs. The historical Williams, the niece of the Parris family, was among the first few afflicted by witchcraft; she also was one of the primary accusers. Hobbs was known to be a bit of a mischief-maker and later would be accused of witchcraft herself. Neither one of these women had any sexual interaction with the real life John Proctor, a man of nearly seventy, who was aged down to his mid-thirties for the play.

Other characters changed too. According to the court documents, Tituba was an American Indian slave, rather than an African American from Barbados. Betty had two siblings in Salem, but Betty in the play is the Parris’ only child. Reverend Hale did not sign any death warrants, though Miller’s version of him has signed seventeen.

Looking back: daily Puritan life

Puritans were not, as mythologized in American history, joyless religious zealots. They did in fact travel to the New World for religious freedom, as they were discontented with the Church of England, and therefore the church and religion were cornerstones of their very life. Every man was entrusted with the morality of the family and therefore must insist that each day started with group prayer; this included wives, children, servants, and even slaves. All were the moral responsibility of the master of the house. After prayer, the husband would go out to the field to work, excluding on the Sabbath, while the wife and the children would clean the house, pursue academic interests, etc.

There were only a few activities that were specifically banned by the Puritanical society: drama, religious music, and erotic poetry. Drama and erotic poetry were thought to bring immorality, while religious music was thought to detract from the messages during church. There were laws that banned other activities, such as excessive alcohol consumption and dancing, but these were not traditionally followed or enforced.

Recreational activities for Puritans included spending time outdoors, fishing, berry picking, and picnics; indoor recreational activities were often social gatherings: feasts, storytelling, sharing news, card playing, and singing. However, these were not to be started until the work for the day was done by all members of the family; while the mother and children waited for the father to return from his work, should their chores be done early, the children would often be quizzed in the Bible or would read the classics: Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, etc.
Witchcraft in *The Crucible* covers a wide spectrum of things. In the first scene, for instance, dancing by firelight in the forest is considered “[trafficking] with spirits” and therefore witchcraft. The accusations come as rather absurd for a modern audience; in historic Salem, the breadth of witchcraft was even wider. Below is a list of everything considered and relating to witchcraft in the play:

- Dancing in the woods
- Tituba singing “her Barbados songs” and “waving her arms over the fire… screeching and gibberish comin’ from her mouth”
- Flying or trying to fly
- “She never waked this morning but her eyes open and she walks, hears naught, sees naught, and cannot eat”
- Death of children soon after birth, specifically Ann Putnam’s seven “unbaptized” babies
- Drinking blood
- Inability to hear the Lord’s name
- Reading a book
- “The stoppage of prayer” or not praying at home
- Seeing an invisible animal, person, or specter
- A chill or a feeling of sudden cold wind
- Laughing at prayer
- Keeping “poppets”
- Premonitions
- Death of an animal through mysterious causes loosely attached to a person
- Reading fortunes

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF WITCHCRAFT

- **c. 560 B.C.** The Torah condemns witchcraft in two books: Exodus and Leviticus; most likely written by a priest, both urge that witches be put to death
- **c. 420 A.D.** Saint Augustine of Hippo, an influential theologian in the early Christian Church, argues that witchcraft is impossible, as only God can suspend the normal laws of the universe. This mentality is picked up by the medieval church and therefore very little energy is spent in tracking down witches.
- **1273** Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican monk, argues that the world was full of evil and dangerous demons. He begins to spread the idea that sex and witchcraft were intertwined: demons were not just there for their own pleasure, but for leading men into temptation.
- **Mid-1400s** A series of witchcraft trials erupt in Europe: defendants admit to flying on poles and animals to attend assemblies presided over by Satan, casting spells on neighbors, having sex with animals, or causing storms. Many of the accused are tortured.
- **1484** Pope Innocent VIII commissions two friars, Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, to publish a full report on suspected witchcraft. This book, *Malleus Maleficarum* (“Hammer of Witches”) argues that Christians have a duty to hunt witches down and kill them. This book can be found in full at http://www.malleusmaleficarum.org/.
- **1500 to 1600** Somewhere between 50,000 and 80,000 suspected witches are executed in Europe. About 80% of them are women. In 1590, the torture of suspected witches is authorized by King James I of England, who also commissions another book on witchcraft: *Daemonologie*, which can be found in full at http://www.gutenberg.org/files/25929/25929-pdf.pdf.
- **1606** Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, heavily featured witchcraft, is first performed
- **1662** A family in Hartford, Connecticut accuses a neighbor, Goodwife Ayres, of witchcraft, after their daughter died just days after spending time in her presence. This prompts a witch hunt hysteria in which seven are tried and four executed.
- **1682** England executes its last witch, Temperance Lloyd, an elderly woman; the case is “deeply flawed.”
- **1692** The first trial in Salem begins.

For a more in-depth look at witch trials in England (the historical precedent for Salem), look at *Witches: A Century of Murder*, available on Netflix. For more on witch trials in the United States, specifically Salem, check out *The Witches* by Stacy Schiff.
If magic was not the cause of the strange behavior in the girls, it stands to reason that there must be a logical explanation. As John Proctor claims, it could simply be children play-acting; several characters mention beating the girls to get them to stop. The accusations often came from one individual or family to a rival, much like Abigail naming Elizabeth due to her relationship with Proctor; though this was invented for the play, the real Salem was rife with land disputes and disagreements on a religion, so it’s entirely plausible that the girls simply named and accused those who caused their family harm.

There is also an understanding that tension politically could have caused internal and individual tension in the people of Salem. Over the previous five years, Salem had seen its charter revoked, had combined with neighboring colonies into the Dominion of New England under a new governor, and had its king replaced by a new one, in turn replacing the Dominion with a new colony, combining Massachusetts with Maine and Plymouth. Even within the smaller communities, there was tension: Boston and Salem were in competition for which would serve as the primary port city for the colony, which put pressure on both cities, especially the more rural city of Salem.

Another possible explanation is the behavior was caused by natural causes. During the late 1600s, there was what was known as a Little Ice Age, or an abnormally cold period in Earth’s history. This caused problems with crops; a severe lack of food could have indeed caused hallucinations, though the intensity of them is debatable. Experts in the 1970s to 1990s believed that the erratic behavior was caused by ergot poisoning, which would have come from ingesting bread made from moldy rye. When ingested, ergot manifests itself similarly to LSD or other psychedelic drugs and could easily have caused this behavior; however, there are other symptoms of ergot poisoning including deformation of the fingers and toes, primarily through skin peeling, that the girls did not have, so this too is unlikely.

The currently held belief is that the girls actually were suffering from psychological trauma or disease. PTSD is a candidate: there was a generational trauma from both King Phillip’s War, a series of violent skirmishes with Native Americans as English settlers began colonizing their land, which could have easily triggered the girls’ reaction, and King William’s War, a series of fights with French colonies in the New World that was running concurrent to the events in Salem. Notably, if Abigail’s claims in the play are correct, Betty’s fainting in the woods when her father startled her corroborates this theory; she was startled by her father’s appearance in a similar way to what she may have felt in an ambush situation from either a French rival or a Native American attack.

Emerson Baker, a history professor at Salem State University and expert on the witch trials, has a different theory: conversion disorder. Conversion disorder is a psychogenic disorder in which mental anguish is physically converted into exterior symptoms, including twitching, shaking, facial tics, garbled speech, trance states. This stems from PTSD in many ways, as it is usually brought about by trauma as well. Baker notes that “the interesting thing about it is today mass conversion tends to be most common in teenagers, and overwhelmingly teenage girls. And it tends to start out at the top of social order;” the daughter of the reverend is followed by the daughters of the doctor and the wealthiest man in town, so that pattern follows.

More on these can be found at https://www.boston.com/news/history/2017/10/31/the-theory-that-may-explain-what-was-tormenting-the-aflicted-in-salems-witch-trials or http://historylists.org/events/list-of-5-possible-causes-of-the-salem-witch-trials.html.
“A bag to swing around your head” (26) literally referring to a feed bag, saying that Putnam will not do what he wants with the people of Salem and feed upon them

Adamant (12) refusing to be persuaded or to change one’s mind

Affidavit (80) a written statement confirmed by oath or affirmation for use as evidence in court

“As God have… Joshua to stop this sun from rising” (120) a biblical allusion to Joshua, before the Battle of Jericho, praying to God to give them a few more hours of darkness in order to win the war

Base (59) having or showing little or no honor, courage, or decency

Befouled (111) made dirty, polluted

Calamity (70) an event causing great and often sudden damage

“Cleave to no faith when faith brings blood” (122) meaning, “Do not cling to faith that harms someone”

Clods (48) lumps of earth, clay

Contempt (90) the offense of being disobedient to or disrespectful of a court of law and its officers

Desperate (10) referring to a desperate or delicate position

Discomfits (38) make someone feel uneasy or embarrassed

“Do you begrudge my bed” (11) a double meaning: she is asking if he resents that he has to house and take care of her, and also if he resents their relation in the first place

“Forced and hoofed” (13) referring to the Devil, saying the action was the Devil’s doing

Greatcoats (114) a large overcoat typically made of wool, designed for warmth and protection against the weather

Gulling (108) fooling or deceiving someone

Incubi (37) a male demon believed to have sexual intercourse with women

Intimations (15) an indication or hint; or the act of making something known, especially in an indirect way

Leaded panes (3) glass in those days was embedded with a small amount of lead and therefore have a slight discoloration in their transparency

Lechery (76) excessive or offensive sexual desires, lustfulness

Lief (69) happily, gladly
Lynn (81) a city approximately ten miles north of Boston, colloquially referred to as the City of Sin for its historic reputation of crime and vice

Marblehead (81) once a major shipyard, now a coastal resort town in Essex County, Massachusetts

Official (50) perhaps self-appointed, Mary Warren says that she has power in the court and must attend, though it is unclear what position she is claiming to occupy

“The Old Boy” (34) a slang term for the Devil

Prodigious (26) could refer to 1) remarkably or impressively great in size, degree, or extent; or 2) unnatural or abnormal

Providence (76) the protective care of God or of nature as a spiritual power; or, timely preparation for future eventualities

Pulpit (10) physically, any raised platform in a church or chapel from which a preacher delivers a sermon; spiritually it refers to the teachings from those sermons

Quail (68) to lose courage, decline, fail

“Remember what the angel Raphael said to the boy Tobias” (88) an allusion to the story of Tobias and the Angel, in which Raphael told him, “Do what is good and no harm can come to thee”; Proctor is saying that Mary will be protected when she tells the truth

Sarcastical (57) relating to or characterized by sarcasm

Shovelboard (139) the British term for shuffleboard, a game in which players use long sticks to shove wooden disks onto the scoring area marked on a smooth surface

Strongbox (117) a small lockable box, typically made of metal, in which valuables may be kept

Succubi (37) a female demon believed to have sexual intercourse with men

Tonnage (69) weight in tons; or, carrying capacity

Trafficked (10) dealing or trading in something illegal

Trifle (63) a small amount

“You are no wintry man” (22) Abigail is saying that John is not cold, that there has been warmth between them in the past

“You your justice would freeze beer” (53) Proctor is saying that Elizabeth has been emotionally cold to him since the affair, so cold that it could freeze alcohol
FURTHER EXPLORATION: ACTIVITY 1

Write Your Own Scene: Contemporary Issues in Historical Contexts

OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to utilize historical events and information to discuss modern issues and events in new ways. They will be able to discuss issues they are passionate about, discover more about United States history, and flex their creative writing muscles.

SUPPLIES NEEDED: For research, a computer with internet access, or history books, newspapers, and other research documents & materials. For writing, a computer with a word processing app, or paper and writing utensils.

1. Talk about how Arthur Miller used the Salem Witch Trials to refer to events happening in the present day. Even though the House Un-American Activities Committee and the Trials were three centuries apart, what were the parallels?

2. As a class, discuss the artistic liberties taken by Miller. Topics can include:
   - What aspects were changed? Why do you think they were? Were they done only to make the story more acceptable to audiences? To simplify the production? Did he change aspects of the story to match his own life experiences?

3. Have students choose a recent event or phenomenon to view through the lens of a past event, movement, etc. This should be something they disagree with or would like to draw attention to (or both), and feel there is a strong comparison to previous events in American history.

4. Students should now research past events in American history that compare to the contemporary issue they have chosen to focus on.

5. Once students feel they have ample research, it’s time for them to write their scene. Some things to consider:
   - Their scene should feature at least two characters, and be set around the historical event and in the time period they focused on.
   - The language of the play can be entirely contemporary, period, or some combination of both - what the playwright feels would better serve the story.
   - As Miller did take artistic liberties, students can take minor liberties as well, so long as it doesn’t change the story from ‘Creative Nonfiction’ into an entirely fictional story. These liberties can include things as simple as consolidating personalities (similar to using Hathorne & Danforth to represent a large number of judges), adjusting ages or characteristics (making John Proctor middle-aged as opposed to a senior citizen), or even just incorporating personal experiences into the story.

6. As an added exercise, students can cast, rehearse, and perform their scenes in class.
FURTHER EXPLORATION: ACTIVITY 2

Compare & Contrast: Witchcraft in Popular Culture

OBJECTIVE: Students, either separately or in groups, should be able to prove their skills in historical research, as well as demonstrating their public speaking and presentation abilities, presenting information to their classmates in engaging and informative ways.

SUPPLIES NEEDED: For research, a computer with internet access, books & related materials. For writing, a computer with a word processing app, or paper and writing utensils.

1. As a class, talk about how witchcraft is portrayed in the play. Discuss the events behind the original Salem Witch Trials. What was considered grounds for witchcraft?

2. Discuss how the idea of “witchcraft” in both the real world and pop culture has changed since the 17th Century. How is it different now? How does “witchcraft” differ between cultures in the same time period (e.g. how was witchcraft treated in 17th Century New England vs. 17th Century Africa)?

3. Have students create a report on two witches/warlocks/wizards/uses of magic and witchcraft in pop culture, compared with the Salem Witch Trials. They should be spaced far apart in time, and can be fictional or historical (e.g. comparing the Salem Witch Trials to Harry Potter and Voodoo practice).

4. The students, upon completing research, should present their findings to the class. This can be done in any way that is most comfortable, or best matches the needs of the class (e.g. a question and answer session, a brief lecture, a Powerpoint presentation).

BONUS STEP:
As an added component, students can add the difference between the perception of magic based on gender; that is, why female witches were so separate from ‘wizards,’ or that while there is a more direct male counterpart to the word witch (warlock), why there isn't a direct female counterpart to wizard, it's still “witch”
Groupthink: The Detrimental Nature of In-Group Thinking and Social Pressures

OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to understand the danger of ‘Groupthink’ and mass social hysteria. They will experience firsthand the danger that comes from suppressing dissenting viewpoints in favor of a group consensus.

SUPPLIES NEEDED: A deck of cards, or the supplies here. A hat/bowl/bag containing each student’s name on a slip of paper. Paper dollars, which can be found on page 23 or can be substituted with a handmade dollar or Monopoly money. If a deck of cards is unavailable, you can download a printable PDF of a playing card deck at https://www.printableboardgames.net/preview/Playing_Card_Deck.

NOTE: Due to the nature of this activity, students should not be given any background information prior to the activity. They should experience the activity before having any discussion of what “Groupthink” is.

This activity is twofold. The first piece is to effectively create tension and divides in the group over minute details. The second piece is to show the danger of allowing those tensions and divides to dominate a society.

Part One: Creating the In-Group
1. Distribute one card from the deck to each student. There should be an even split of red & black cards, and each of the four suits should be distributed evenly. Both number and face cards should be distributed, but they don't have to be equal.
2. Have students form small groups of 3 or 4. Try to spread out the cards (e.g. so there isn't a group of four red face cards)
3. Distribute paper dollars to each group, three for each student (i.e. a group of three gets 9 dollars total, a group of four gets 12).
4. Students should now decide how to divide the dollars between them. If necessary, make sure to note that the playing card they have should have no bearing on how much money they take. Each group should work towards the common good
5. After a few minutes of deliberating, or when the money has been divided, alert the students that there are two different tiers of cards: Tier 1, or the Uppermost Tier, are black cards. Tier 2, the lower tier, are the red cards. The top tier is considered more important in this society. Have the students again distribute the money between them. There is no qualifier for who gets what amount other than the color of the card.
6. After a few minutes of deliberating, or when the money has been divided, alert the students that there is a new set of divides, this time divided by card suits. While this maintains the red/black divide, this new divide is more important and creates a new tier system. So, the new tier system is: 1-Clubs, 2-Spades, 3-Diamonds, 4-Hearts
7. After a few minutes of deliberating, or when the money has been divided, tell the class that there is a new set of divides, based on the value of the card. Again, while this does not stop any previous divides, they are more important in tiering people. The new tier system is: 1-Club face cards, 2-Spade face cards, 3-Diamond face cards, 4-Heart face cards, 5-Club number cards, 6-Spade number cards, 7-Diamond number cards, 8-Heart number cards.
8. After a few minutes of deliberating, or when the money has been divided, have the students break from their groups and create one large group again. However much money they have from their group they should bring with them. If the group was unable to reach a decision, for now the money is distributed evenly between them and they return to their seats.
Part Two: The In-Group

1. Tell students that now, they are again one group working toward a common good. But, two students have committed an unspecified crime. They may have committed said crime together, or separately. Randomly select two people from a hat. Announce them to the class - for these instructions, they will be called 1A & 1B.

2. 1A & 1B have been anonymously accused of crimes in the society. They will be exiled from the society and their money lost, and they cannot defend themselves in any way. Instead of a defense, they have the chance to claim innocence and accuse two other students, one each, of the crime. For these instructions, they will be called 2A & 2B. These accusations should be based on past behavior in the group activity, and any type of behavior can be used (e.g. because they had a face card and tried taking too much money, they had a low value heart card and wanted a fair split, they were an average tiered card but did nothing to help solve an argument). They cannot talk of their own behavior, though. After the accusations, 1A & 1B can then no longer speak.

3. 2A & 2B are allowed to justify why 1A & 1B committed the crime. But, they cannot defend themselves. After this, 2A & 2B can no longer speak.

   NOTE: If it is beneficial to the argument, while they can't accuse each other, students can also try to throw blame to the other member of their pair. For instance, 1A cannot accuse 1B of the crime they have already been accused of, but they can try to pin blame on 1B in addition to the student they accused.

   Likewise, 2A cannot accuse 2B, but they can make the case against 2B stronger.

4. After the four students have been identified and silenced, the rest of the group must now vote on which two people to exile. It can be any combination of the four, it doesn't matter how or when they were accused. The vote, though, must be unanimous. If the vote is unanimous, skip to step 16.

5. If the first vote is not unanimous, students may discuss and justify their positions, explain why they voted as they did, and try to convince others to join their side. They have 5 minutes with which to do so.

6. Before the final vote, tell the students that the vote must be unanimous. If it is not, majority rule will have their plan enacted. Additionally, anybody who votes in the minority will be exiled from the society and stripped of their money. If there is an even tie in votes, all members of society will be exiled and lose their money.

7. Have the final vote.

8. All students who have been exiled must forfeit their money. If it was not unanimous, any person who voted in the minority is now exiled and forfeits their money. They can no longer speak or participate in society discussions.

9. Draw another name from the hat. It should be somebody who hasn't been exiled. If an exile's name is drawn, draw again until a non-exile is found. All the money forfeited will either be given to this person, or distributed even among the group.

10. Students have two minutes to discuss if this is fair or not. After two minutes, all discussion must end.

11. Before the vote, tell the students that again, it must be unanimous. If not, any minority vote will be exiled, and their money will be distributed evenly among those who voted in the majority. If it is a tie, again all students will be exiled, and money forfeited.

12. Have the vote.

13. Exile those who voted in the minority, and redistribute the money accordingly.
Discussion
The activity is now over. Facilitate a discussion about the activity. Key points include:
- Who ended up with the most money? Who had the least (that wasn't exiled)? Was it dictated entirely by chance? Were they a face card of clubs so they started with the most already?
- How did the majority/minority rules feel? What happened when dissenting/minority voices were threatened with exile? Was it beneficial to the whole group, or exclusively to the majority?
- Even though the group was supposed to ignore the value of everybody’s cards, how did they play into the voting? Did people vote based on the card? Did they vote based on prior actions? Effectively, did prior tiering and biases come into play during the group portion of the activity?
- Those accused of crimes, how did it feel to be accused of something that wasn't specified at all? To be accused randomly? To be accused because of your actions?
- How quickly did people change their votes once the exiling of minorities became a possibility? Did people knowingly change to avoid exile? Did people actively vote knowing they’d be exiled to stand their ground?
FURTHER EXPLORATION: RESOURCES

Books

*The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West*, by Brian P. Levack; Yale University Press, 2013

Websites

On witchcraft:
http://www.malleusmaleficarum.org/

On Arthur Miller and *The Crucible*:
https://www.neh.gov/about/awards/jefferson-lecture/arthur-miller-biography
https://www.biography.com/people/arthur-miller-9408335

On the importance of this play today:

Video

*Witches: A Century of Murder*, available at https://www.netflix.com/watch/80118891?trackId=13752289&ctx=0%2C0%2Cb66d3638-8fbc-4e6e-875e-48d0a410b144-164096927