**Analysis of the allegory**

First performed in January of 1953 at the height of America's red scare, [*The Crucible*](http://www.gradesaver.com/the-crucible) is first and foremost a political argument, relating the Salem witchcraft trials to their contemporary equivalent in Miller's time, the McCarthy hearings. The figurative 'witch hunt' of McCarthyism becomes literal in Miller's play, which is constructed to illustrate how fear and hysteria mixed with an atmosphere of persecution may lead to tragically unjust consequences.

The Puritan life in Salem is rigid and somber, allowing little room for people to break from the monotony and strict work ethic that dominated the close-knit society. Furthermore, the Puritan religious ethic informed all aspects of society, promoting safeguards against immorality at any cost to personal privacy or justice. The Puritans of Massachusetts were a religious faction who, after years of suffering persecution themselves, developed a willful sense of community to guard against infiltration from outside sources. It is this paradox that Miller finds to be a major theme of *The Crucible*: in order to keep the community together, members of that community believed that they must in some sense tear it apart. Miller relates the intense paranoia over the integrity of the Puritan community to their belief that they are in some sense a chosen people, who will forge a new destiny for the world. This relates strongly to the political climate of the early 1950’s in which Miller wrote *The Crucible*. After the end of World War II, the United States found itself engaged in a struggle for political supremacy with Communist forces, in particular the Soviet Union. Just as the Salem authorities believed that witchcraft threatened their community, many Americans during this time saw Communism as a threat to the American way of life.