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Faculty of Arts and Philosophy**

**Common features of the Czechoslovak political trials of the 1950s and
in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible***

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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

První část práce by měla zahrnout obecné definice a stručnou historii "honů na čarodějnice" v průběhu evropských a amerických dějin, zvláště události čarodějnických procesů v letech 1692-93 v Salem ve státě Massachusetts, jak byly vyličený v dramatu Arthura Millera "Zkouška ohněm" (The Crucible, 1953). Autorka by měla načrtnout Millerovo vysvětlení jeho díla jako alegorie McCarthyismu v USA padesátých let a dále zmínit aspekty Millerových dalších děl s podobnou tematikou. Další část práce by se měla zaměřit na stručnou charakteristiku hlavních historických momentů a politického klimatu v Československé republice v letech těsně po 2. světové válce. Tato část zdůrazní vzestup KSČ v roce 1948 a nejvýznamnější události obklopující "zinscenované politické procesy" padesátých let, stejné doby, během které probíhalo vyšetřování Sněmovního výboru pro neamerickou činnost (House Un-American Activities Committee) ve Spojených státech. Práce by měla porovnat zapojení významných osobností a skupin, vynesených rozsudků a zapojení masmédií jako politické propagandy v obou zemích. Krátce by mohly být zmíněny i podobné události v Sovětském svazu, které začaly v roce 1936. Závěr by mohl obecněji porovnat prvky náboženské a politické persekuce.

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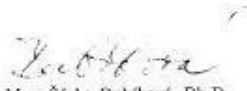
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Abstract:

Abigail Williams, the trigger of the hysterical manhunt in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* abused the religious sense of puritan society to cry false accusations on innocent people who were imprisoned or hanged. The play was written in the 1950s United States and it is based on then Joe McCarthy's witch hunt. The events from the colony of Massachusetts served the author to write an allegory. He transformed the figurative witch hunt into a real one, which took place in a Salem at the end of the 17th century. Similar persecutions were taking place in Czechoslovakia at the same period of time during which hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee were being held in the United States. The aim of this paper is to analyze the Czechoslovak political trials and the *The Crucible* and to identify their common features.

Key words: witch hunts, McCarthyism, political trials, *The Crucible*, Arthur Miller

Abstrakt:

Abigail Williams, hlavní spoušť hysterické štvance v Artur Millerově „Zkouška Ohněm“, zneužila náboženského přesvědčení puritánské společnosti ke krivým obvinění nevinných lidí z čarodějnictví, kteří skončili ve vězení, v horším případě na šibenicích. Divadelní hra významného dramatika, kterou napsal v 50. letech 20. století ve Spojených státech, je založena na tehdy probíhajícím honu na čarodějnice senátora Joe McCarthyho. Události z kolonie, která se nacházela ve státě Massachusetts, posloužili autorovi k napsání alegorie. Figurativní hon na čarodějnice převedl do skutečného, který se odehrával ve vesnici Salem na konci 17. století. Persekuce podobné honu na čarodějnice ze Salemu se odehrávaly na území tehdejšího Československa ve stejnou dobu, kdy probíhalo vyšetřování Sněmovního výboru pro neamerickou činnost (HUAC) ve Spojených státech. Cílem této práce je analýza těchto dvou událostí a zhodnocení jejich společných rysů.

Klíčová slova: hon na čarodějnice, politické procesy, McCarthismus, *Zkouška ohněm*, Arthur Miller

Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Witch hunts	6
2.1 The term “witch”	6
2.2 History of Salem	7
2.3 The witch hunts in the USA after WWII	9
2.4 House Un-American Activities Committee	11
3. Arthur Miller’s life and writing	14
4. The Crucible	17
4.1 The Plot	17
4.2 The Characters	21
4.2.1 John Proctor	22
4.2.2 Abigail Williams	22
4.2.3 Elisabeth Proctor	23
4.3 The allegory	24
4.4 The themes	26
5. Postwar division of the World	28
6. Post-war development in Czechoslovakia and KSČ’s rise to power	29
7. Political trials	30
7.1 A brief history of political trials	30
8. Church trials	32
8.1 Church policy	32
8.1.1 December 1949’s events	33
8.1.2 Violent death of the priest and propaganda	34
9. Comparison political trials in Czechoslovakia vs witch trials in Arthur Miller’s <i>The Crucible</i>	36
10. Conclusion	41
11. Resumé	43

1. Introduction

This bachelor thesis analyzes the play *The Crucible*, first published in 1953. For that purpose, chapter II introduces briefly the history of witch hunts, the main topic of the play, from the literal and figurative point of view and the early history of Salem, New England which is the setting of the work. To some extent, this chapter outlines typical features of Puritan society. Arthur Miller found inspiration for the drama from the period of McCarthyism. Therefore, the chapter is followed by clarification of the term “witch hunt” in the United States in the 1950s when senator John McCarthy led the country against un-American activists. Moreover it deals with the House Un-American Activities Committee and their hounding of American intellectuals, writers and Hollywood personalities. The next chapter analyzes *The Crucible* from a literal point of view. Firstly it introduces the prominent life and some works of Arthur Miller, who was one of the leading American playwrights of the twentieth century. Secondly it summarizes the plot of the play and concentrates on the depiction of the main characters - Abigail Williams, John Proctor and Elizabeth Proctor. Furthermore, this chapter depicts some major themes of the play and illustrates it as an allegory.

The second part of the thesis describes the political trials in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s. For this purpose some important events from the history of the postwar period were chosen. The following chapters briefly describe the situation in Europe and especially Czechoslovakia after WWII. Specifically it represents the structure and examples of particular political trials. Moreover, church trials are mentioned and more closely, it pays attention to the case of Josef Toufar.

The last part of the thesis focuses on the comparison of the witch trials in *The Crucible* and the Czechoslovak political trials in the 1950s. Common features of not only the trials themselves, but also of the two historical periods are explored.

2. Witch hunts

The term “witch hunt” can be interpreted in two different ways. Firstly, it can be understood as a search for witches or witchcraft evidence; secondly, as a general term referring to the persecution of an individual or a group of individuals using as a motivation or excuse the protection of the larger society, as in the McCarthyist persecution of communists in the United States.

2.1 The term “witch”

The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* describes a witch as “a woman who is believed to have magic powers, especially to do evil things. In stories, she usually wears a black pointed hat and flies on a broom-stick.” The *Cambridge Dictionary Online* suggests that a witch is “a woman who is believed to have magical powers and who uses them to harm or help other people” In addition, both illustrate that a witch is “ an ugly unpleasant old woman“. The *Macmillan Dictionary* firstly explains that a witch is either “a woman in stories who has magic powers“ or “a real woman who claims that she has magic powers.” Secondly witch is characterized as “an insulting word for an unpleasant woman.”

To sum up, all three aforementioned dictionaries define a witch as a woman with magic powers. The interpretations of the noun “witch” can be found in contemporary dictionaries or stories. Nowadays, when a woman is being called a “witch“ does not mean that she is about to be facing an accusation of witchcraft, being hunted down and tortured to death. Clearly, in the past she was.

The *Malleus maleficarum* was “the most influential and widely used handbook on witchcraft, published by the Catholic inquisition authorities in 1485-1486.” Its authors assert that a woman is “a foe to friendship, an inescapable punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, domestic danger a delectable detriment, an evil nature, painted with fair colors. [...] Women are by nature instruments of Satan – they are by nature carnal, a structural defect rooted in the original creation.”

(www.gendercide.org)

The *Malleus maleficarum*, translated in English as *The Hammer of Witches*, appeared shortly after the printing press was invented, was published in less than 20 editions, and “was to become the most influential and widely used handbook on witchcraft”. Thousands of women had suffered and been tortured as a consequence of the moral support provided in the manuscript. (www.gendercide.org.) “Over the next forty years, the *Malleus* would be reprinted thirteen times and come to help define the crime of witchcraft.” (<http://law2.umkc.edu/>)

2.2 History of Salem

The present-day town of Danvers, Massachusetts, site of the witch hunt of 1692, was known then as Salem. Village Salem was founded in 1626 and had become an important and wealthy port. It was known as the richest port in New England. This chapter ended in the mid-nineteenth when larger harbors started to be built. Such docks could handle larger ships than the small ones like Salem. Therefore, the village had to find another way of income and turned to industrial and tourist trades and started to prosper again. Unfortunately, the “great fire” that “started in a leather factory” burnt hundreds of homes and left thousands of people homeless. (www.associatedcontent.com)

It is essential to mention that in the 17th century Salem was inhabited by puritan society. The term “puritanism” comes from England in the 16th century and it “purports to identify a form of Protestant religion, comprehending theology, discipline, piety, and perhaps other practices and patterns of thinking. [...] Puritanism and its synonym precisianism, appeared initially as terms of abuse.” Its followers were exploring life in the ways of the “divine prospects” they had found in the Holy Bible. (Encyclopedia 428) In the 1620s, their unsuccessful attempts of reformation of the Church resulted in “the formation of” the Massachusetts Bay Company. Where “[B]y removing the charter and the board of directors to the colony, they allowed it to become virtually self governing, with practically no government control from London.” (Encyclopedia 431) On 11 November 1620, aboard the ship Mayflower (now a symbol of early European colonization) “41 men, representing 102 ‘Pilgrim’ and ‘non-Pilgrim’

passengers, signed the Mayflower Compact” which “remained Plymouth Colony’s authorizing source of governmental power and is considered by some to be America’s first constitution.” (Encyclopedia 462)

Since the establishment of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630, the social and political tension was increasing gradually and culminated in 1692 with the largest outbreak of witchcraft accusations in North America, a series of disastrous events called the Salem Witch Trials. It all began as a “fearful curiosity” of a group of mainly young girls “who met in small informal gatherings to discuss the future” grew into hysteria. (Boyer and Nesselbaum 1)

Nobody knew then, or knows now, precisely what it was the girls were experiencing. They never told; perhaps they did not know themselves. By February 1692 it was the grownups who began to try to put into words what was happening to their children (Boyer and Nesselbaum 2).

On February 29, 1692 the girls who were discovered dancing in a forest, “under the pressure of intense adult questioning” named their “tormenters”. (Boyer and Nesselbaum 3) Afterwards, „the nearest members of the upper house of the provincial legislature“ came from Salem Town to “conduct a public examination of the three women”. After the questioning, the 3 accused women were arrested. (Boyer and Nesselbaum 3)

The girls who accused the aforementioned women of witchcraft continued. Other innocent women were taken into custody and the arrests began to accelerate. So far, all the examinations were held in Salem Village. Nevertheless, with an increasing number of prosecuted villagers (it was no longer just women) it started to be hopeless “to treat the outbreak” locally. The next examinations, on April 11, were held in Salem Town “before the deputy governor, six magistrates, and ‘a very great assembly’ (Woodward, in Boyer and Nesselbaum 5) which included several ministers”. (Boyer and Nesselbaum 5, 6) In early spring the prisons were “overflowing.” Although it was legal to imprison people in Massachusetts, to hold trials was not. The reason for this was that the state was “without a legally established government.” (Boyer and Nesselbaum 6) A new executive, Sir William Phips, was called to Salem to help with the situation. During his presence in Salem he managed to constitute “six members of his advisory council as a

special Court of Oyer and Terminer to ‘hear and determine’ (Washburn in Boyer and Nisselbaum 7) the enormous backlog of witchcraft cases.” (Boyer and Nisselbaum 7)

In June the first “session” was held in Salem Town, which resulted in the first sentence of death. (Boyer and Nisselbaum 8) In a variety of towns across the Massachusetts Bay Colony between February 1692 and May 1693 more than a hundred people were “arrested and imprisoned.” Many more were “accused but not formally pursued by the authorities, and 19 were eventually hanged. The best-known trials were conducted by the Court of Oyer and Terminer in 1692 in Salem Town.” (www.witchcraftandwitches.com)

Nowadays, this cruel part of history annually brings tourists from all over the world to Salem. The town profits from the above mentioned events and offers entertaining tours to visitors. The official Salem Website offers tours such as: “Haunted Footsteps Ghost Tours, Hocus Pocus Tours, The Salem Witch Walk” or for instance “Witch City Segaway” where you learn about their “unique history as you travel around Salem on your own Segway with our guide leading the way.” (salem.org) “The Salem Witch Museum takes you there, back to Salem 1692. Visitors are given a dramatic history lesson using stage sets with life-size figures, lighting and a narration - an overview of the Witch Trials of 1692” (www.salemwitchmuseum.com). Tourists can not only go on a group tour, but also purchase souvenirs from the gift shop.

2.3 The witch hunts in the USA after WWII

In late forties and early fifties, there was a growing fear of Communism in the United States. Americans were constantly questioned about political opinions. Senator Joseph McCarthy led the country on a “witch hunt” first against American politicians, later intellectuals, writers and Hollywood figures. McCarthy’s policy affected a great number of peoples’ lives and careers. (Toinet 7)

1. Segway - (trademark) a self-balancing personal transportation device with two wheels; can operate in any level pedestrian environment (www.thefreeonlinedictionary.com)

Joseph R. McCarthy came to the attention of the public and the media through his famous statement “I have here in my hand a list of two hundred and five people that were known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping the policy of the State Department.”¹ In fact McCarthy had no list on paper with names, and he had no direct evidence that anyone on his imaginary list were communists. McCarthy did not give an explanation about the number 205 or how he came to it. No one had the courage to accuse a senator of lying Arthur Miller attacks mass persecution and the danger of false accusations, which can be seen as a comparison to the activities of McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee. (Toniet 29,30)

The Senate demanded an explanation, though. McCarthy submitted a list on February 20. The list, with no names, just consecutive numbers, was comprised of the names of people working at the State Department in 1948 and when the list was submitted only 57 of the employees were still working there. The list was based entirely on rumor, some of those named because of their sexual orientation or past connection with Nazism. McCarthy was obviously lying. The Senate established an investigatory committee and McCarthy became a media celebrity. He was taking liberties with gossip and attacking whomever he chose until he made the fatal mistake of choosing the army to be the target of his false accusations. (Toniet 31, 32)

McCarthy was playing with fire when he began to accuse the army of incompetence. This time he crossed the line. In the live ABC broadcast of the Senate hearing at which the army defended itself against McCarthy’ accusations, the public finally had a chance to see the senator’s brutality and corruption. He assaulted everyone and attacked the Counsel for the Army, Joseph N. Welch, the author of a quote that has often been connected with McCarthy’s ultimate failure “Have you no sense of decency, sir?” Ironically, McCarthyism was defeated by the power of publicity.

Americans were stunned when they finally saw McCarthy with their own eyes and not through the viewpoint of journalists. To see him as a human being meant to open many eyes.(Toniet 35, 36) “All that was because of the Army-McCarthy hearings. The Senator’s popularity decreased sharply. McCarthy was created by the press; television,

which did not take any side and just showed his performance, turned it against him.”
(Toinet 36, my translation)

2.4 House Un-American Activities Committee

During the witch hunts period new laws were enacted to prevent the establishment of any communist organizations or communities. It was not illegal to be a communist, however to be part of any “Para communist association,” which means an organization that was connected with communism in any way, was seen as shameful even if not illegal. Congress considered the 1940 “arms against subversion” law inefficient and supplemented it with a new law, the Internal Security Act, also known as the McCarran Act, in the year 1950. (Toinet 40,41)

The code administered immigration and naturalization laws, corroborating Smith’s Alien Registration Act, strengthened espionage acts, established preventive imprisonment of persons with the potential to commit espionage or sabotage and most importantly it created the Subversive Activities Control Board. This board was authorized to decide which organizations are communist-action and which communist-front, and to persuade them to register at the Department of Justice. If they did not register they could face a long time behind bars. (Toinet 42, my translation)

In other words, a communist was considered guilty in either case, whether one did or did not register.

Apart from the whole apparatus of acts, many more presidential regulations existed. According to the President’s decree n.9835 in March 1947, every federal officer had to remit to a reassessment of his loyalty to the United States of America. All the information that concerned him the appeared in the files of the FBI, the Civil Service Commission, the Army, the House Un-American Activities Committee and other local authorities had to be validated. When “negative” information was discovered it came to the Loyalty Review Board, who then crosschecked the person and announced the result to the Government. According to Ralph Brown there were some 13.5 million Americans involved in loyalty assessments. (Toinet 42, my translation)

The base of the loyalty programme was constituted of the so called-list of the Attorney General, created by A. Mitchell Palmer. It contained six types of organizations: “communist-action and communist-front organization, fascist, totalitarian, subversive,

groups that propagate exercising power and violence to deprive fellow citizens of their rights and associations that intend to change the form of the regime by anti-constitutional devices.” (Toinet 43,44, my translation)

“When, in 1947, the Justice Department again applied the programme, 78 organizations figured on the list and the number was increasing: in 1948 there were 110, in 1950 197 (out of them 132 communist-action or communist-front) and in 1953, during Eisenhower’s presidency 254.” The Attorney General Tom Clark was the only person entitled to put an organization on the list. To be placed on it meant instant termination for such organizations. It was due process. (Toinet 44, my translation)

“The Justice Department list was one of the extensive official lists, which were circulating during the McCarthyist period in the USA. The FBI had a database of fingerprints of more than 4 million officers and 37 million workers. The International Workers Order, a cooperative insurance company, was considered to be a parallel organization of a communist party.” In 1955, the Civil Service Commission declared to have a database of 2 million members of subversive organizations. Tax Administration, the army, customs, post offices, immigration and naturalization departments – all these institutions built, completed or expanded their databases about subversive elements. (Toinet 44, 45, my translation)

Congress did not lag behind: HUAC, in 1948, revealed that they had established a file with more than 300,000 names whose *activities and membership is registered*, 363,119 people who signed a petition for communists to candidate in elections. HUAC worked out their own list of subversive organizations, more complete than the one of the Justice Department because it named 624 organizations. Cooperation between the executive and the legislative branches was perfect in this case. HUAC let properly certified officers look at their lists. Both the president’s commission and Congress wanted to be given credit for being the most anti-communist. Moreover, Congress sought publicity through the witch-hunt. (Toinet 45, my translation)

Congress took an interest in subversive activities even in Roosevelt’s times. The ancestor of HUAC was the Dies Committee, established in 1938. In 1945 HUAC

became a stable committee with all appropriate concessions. Regular hearings about communist infiltration into the film industry represented the height of McCarthyism. (Toinet 47)

In 1947 HUAC began to subpoena certain Hollywood entertainment professionals. The suspicion was that their work was communist-inspired. When it came to the hearings, some of them were rather comic, e.g. “when Walt Disney claimed that communists wanted to use Mickey Mouse for the behalf of their aims. The committee even benefited from such humorous imputations since the press was covering it.” (Toinet 109, my translation) It did not take long for the media to expand their coverage of the proceedings.

The committee asked some “willing” witnesses (i.e. those who agreed that they would testify against communists) to state names. Ten of them discussed the situation with the committee rather ironically. They spoke about members of Congress as Nazis, and refused to answer questions, “doubted the legality of their investigations and invoked their right of free speech.” They became known as the “Hollywood Ten.” Later they were sentenced, imprisoned and “blacklisted.” (Toinet 110,112) “The next 10 years saw some 320 people barred from work in film studios over their alleged membership of the the Communist party.”(<http://news.bbcimg.co.uk>)

3 Arthur Miller's life and writing

Arthur Asher Miller was born on 17 October 1915 in Harlem, New York City into a Jewish family. His mother Augusta Barnett was married in terms of a settlement between fathers, "textile businessmen". Miller's father Isidor was raised in a Polish village, Radomyśl, the same village where Augusta's father came from. Isidor became a successful "textile businessman" in Harlem, close to Lenox Avenue. (Monroe + Miller) The Millers were flourishing until the Wall Street Crash in 1929.(2009 148) After graduating from high school, young Arthur was exploring his work possibilities and found himself struggling with identities. He knew he wanted to be a writer like his grandfather but did not have the money to go to University. Therefore, he decided to earn it as for instance a "bread carrier, truck driver and a warehouse keeper." All these professions confirmed his opinion that he always was and always would be an outsider. Even the other workers saw the "presence of an intellectual." It was common that he would be reading books on the train on the way to work, thereby "strengthening his differentness." The other workers also knew that as long as he had enough money for studies, he would go his own way. Arthur Miller enrolled in University of Michigan in 1934. In his free time he was worked to pay for the studies and was writing his first scripts. He was a dishwasher and fed laboratory mice to become important. (Maerker 49-58, my translation)

I have never understood why it had to be a theatre play, why I could not have been interested in novels or short stories... Drama seemed easier. One could go bypass this and that and it evocated kind of an architectonic experience which prose was not able to evoke. Maybe it came from my yearn for voices and sound imitation. (Maerker 58, my translation)

Miller's attitude to drama grew out of a need to be better than other students, because he did not want to be "just a spectator" but also an "actor and a master." (Maerker 58, my translation)

Miller's first attempt of writing was dealing with "an unavoidable conflict," one father, and his two sons. It was an "autobiographical dramatic work that I had to write," he says. In one day and one night he finished the first act of *Focus*. He had his own rules – "to write about what he was familiar with" (naturally it was himself), to make the spectators feel what he felt. He first produced that in *Focus* (1945). "The magic power,

to create a human being and make him or her see and feel what I saw and Felt just with symbols – I created a new shadow on the earth... against irrelevance.” Dozens of opportunities were opened for the playwright after the performance of his first play. Among them, a Hollywood proposal to be a “paid author for 250 dollars a week” but he turned it down. “My purity was ... still so incredibly pure.” He rather worked at a theatrical project for 23 dollars a week. (Maerker 59 – 61, my translation)

Arthur Miller received awards at the University. He was already a “generally acknowledged as a promising young playwright.” His first four of five plays had no “public acceptance.” However, 3 years after his only novel, *Focus*, Miller accomplished his greatest success so far with the drama *All My Sons*. (Maerker 65, my translation)

Not only he was about to become one of the most acknowledged dramatists of all time, but he also was about to meet his best friend, director Elia Kazan, due to this play. Elia was “gathering experience.” He was well-known, although not yet famous. He found *All My Sons*, “spectacular” and admired its “power and social involvement.” In the play Miller describes a father-son conflict and the “unimaginable” guilt that brings the father to the recognition that the dead of World War II were “all his sons” and describes the consequences the war meant for his family.

In 1949 Miller started to write *Death of Salesman*, which finally him worldwide attention. Again, it handles a father-son conflict and the “clash with reality when trying to reach the American dream.” Defeated, exhausted salesman Willy Loman stands in the center of the story. Like Joe Keller (the hero of *All My Sons*) Loman is a busy man who tries to “get on a train that brings him to happiness, but he becomes a victim of his dreams, an outcast of the system to which he himself has nothing to offer.” Elia Kazan staged this piece. “The play means a line of division. American theater will no longer be the same,” stated the lead actor Lee J. Cobb, who said this to Miller after the first rehearsal. “There was no applause immediately after the first public performance of *Death of Salesman* in Philadelphia. The audience remained sitting still, some crying, some discussing quietly – a while later they started applauding enthusiastically and

endlessly.” Later, from the public’s response it became clear that he had touched the sensitive place of society at that time - losing dreams. (Maerker 65-68, my translation)

Later that year, Arthur Miller accepted the “chairmanship to a committee associated with culture and science of the World Peace Conference which came into US history as The Waldorf Conference.” This naturally was highly discussed at the time when Miller was about to testify in the House Un-American Activity Committee. (Maerker 68,69, my translation)

Out of Miller’s other successful plays *A Memory of Two Mondays* should be mentioned. The drama mirrors, in author’s own words, “a picture of life where people must serve an industrial apparatus that feeds their human bodies but does not provide the nutrients for their souls.” Furthermore, in 1955 the author is “fascinated by the passion that drives a docker Eddie Carbone to perdition” in *A View from the Bridge*. (1962 9,10, my translation)

Arthur Miller was married three times. Two years after graduating from University of Michigan he married a woman (and a mother of two of his children) from a Catholic family, Mary Grace Slattery. The marriage lasted 15 years until he decided that it was no longer love as much as “everyday routine and the norms of society” and they got divorced in 1956 (Maerker 61). Later that year, he married a film star Marilyn Monroe. In 1958 Miller wrote a script for her to the film *The Misfits*. Unfortunately, shortly before the premiere they got divorced. Marilyn died of a drug overdose. In February 1962 he got married again. With his new wife Inge Morath, they had two children and lived together until 2002 when she passed away (2009 152, my translation).

Arthur Asher Miller died of heart failure in Connecticut on February 10, 2005. He was one of the most important personalities of American modern drama in the 20th century. He tried to refute the idea of America as a “paradise” on earth in his work. His “social-critical” plays were, especially at the beginning of his career, influenced by Henrik Ibsen. Nowadays, his social tragedies are still considered actual (2009 153, my translation).

4. *The Crucible*

The Crucible was first performed in January 1953 “at the height of America’s Red Scare.” Not only is it considered one of the great literary works ever written by Miller, but it also is his most-performed play. Arthur Miller wrote it after World War II in the “witch hunt” period. The figurative witch hunt becomes literal in his play. His concern was, amongst others, to warn people about the consequences that hysteria, mass persecution and false accusations may lead to. The play’s powerful impact comes from the author’s ability to illustrate the time as a reflection of the period when it was written. The McCarthy era and the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) hearings was Miller’s inspiration for the play. (2009 150) The author of the piece stated that “If I hadn’t written *The Crucible* that period would be unregistered in our literature.” (<http://showbusinessweekly.com>)

4.1 The Plot

The story takes place in a small Puritan town Salem, close to Boston, Massachusetts in 1692. It depicts one event in the lives of the villagers when one innocent act of a curious young girls turns the whole town into hysteria.

The setting of Act One is in Reverend Samuel Parris’ house. A group of young girls, often referred to as children by other villagers, were discovered dancing in a forest by Parris. One of the girls, Betty, cannot be awakened after drinking a beverage made out of chicken blood. Being the father the girl’s father and an uncle of another of the girls, Reverend Parris decides to keep everything secret and try to deal with the situation in private.

For a while, Betty wakes up screaming “You drank blood, Abby! [...] You drank a charm to kill John Proctor’s wife! You drank a charm to kill Goody Proctor!” (*The Crucible* 17) Abigail, who is secretly in love in Proctor, does not take any chances and starts to accuse others of witchcraft. First, she points the finger at Tituba, a West Indian

slave, who fights back at first but confesses making a pact with the Devil after all. To the question “When the devil comes to you does he ever come with another person?”, Tituba names Sarah Osburn. (The Crucible 29)

Abigail takes the opportunity of turning the situation to mayhem and starts acting like she was bewitched.

ABIGAIL: I want to open myself! I want the light of God, I want the sweet love of Jesus! I danced for the Devil; I saw him; I wrote in his book; I go back to Jesus; I kiss His hand – I saw Sarah Good with the Devil! I saw Good Osburn with the devil! I saw Bridget Bishop with the Devil!

BETTY: I saw George Jacobs with the Devil! I saw Goody Howe with the Devil!

PARRIS: She speaks. She speaks!

HALE: Glory to God!-it is broken, they are free!

BETTY: I saw Martha Bellows with the Devil!

ABIGAIL: I saw Goody Sibber with the Devil!

PUTNAM: The marshal, I’ll call the marshal!

HALE: Let the marshal bring irons. (The Crucible 45)

Act Two occurs eight days later, at John Proctor’s house. Him and Elisabeth, who have been married for a long time and have two young boys, are having a serious conversation about the events that have been happening lately in town (court establishment and consequent imprisonment of fourteen people due to witchcraft accusations). The reader learns that Abigail used to be Proctors’ servant and was dismissed due to her affair with John. Mary Warren, a girl they have hired to help with the house and the children, enters the scene as it develops. She excuses her absence by telling the Proctors that she was at the proceedings the whole day, testifying against accused witches. On account of that, the Proctors learn that more villagers were arrested and that even Elisabeth’s name was mentioned at the court. Peripherally, the word is spread about a “poppet” (puppet) which Mary made in court and gave to Elisabeth. In the middle of their discussion, Reverend Hale, an expert on witchcraft who has been called by Reverend Parris, enters to question the couple suspected of witchcraft. Later on, Giles Corey and Francis Nurse, whose wives have just been arrested, come to seek advice. At last, Marshal Cheever and a warrant arrive for Elisabeth’s arrest. The proof of Elisabeth being a witch seems to be the previously mentioned poppet.

CHEEVER: The girl, the Williams girl, Abigail Williams, sir. She sat to dinner in Reverend Parris' house tonight, and without word nor warnin', she falls to the floor. Like a struck beast, he says, and screamed a scream that a bull would weep to hear. And he goes to save her, and stuck two inches in the flesh of her belly he draw a needle out. And demandin' of her how she come to be so stabbed, she testify it were your wife's familiar spirit pushed it in.

PROCTOR: Why, she done it herself! I hope you're not takin' this for proof, Mister Hale.

CHEEVER: Tis hard proof! I find here a poppet Goody Proctor keeps. I have found it, sir. And in the belly of the poppet a needle stuck. I tell you true, Proctor, I never warranted to see such proof of Hell, and I bid you obstruct me not, for I- (The Crucible 72)

In the midst of Proctor's protests his wife is taken away in chains. He vows that he will testify against Abigail and confess to adultery in court. The scene closes with him saying to Mary "My wife will never die for me. I will bring your guts into your mouth, but that goodness will not die for me." (The Crucible 78)

Act Three takes place in the "vestry room of the Meeting House." (The Crucible 79) An examination is proceeding when Francis Nurse, Giles Corey and John Proctor along with Mary come to testify against the girls to Deputy Governor Dansforth and Judge Hathorne. Proctor brings a testament where 91 people insure a good opinion for Rebecca Nurse, Elisabeth Proctor and Martha Corey. Moreover, Corey brings a deposition where he charges Putnam on inciting his daughter:

DANFORTH: Mr. Putnam, I have here an accusation by Mr. Corey against you. He states that you coldly prompted your daughter to cry witchery upon George Jacobs that is now in jail.

PUTNAM: It is a lie!

DANFORTH: What proof do you submit for your charge, sir?

COREY: My proof is there! If Jacobs hangs for a witch he forfeit up his property – that's law! And there is none but Putnam with the coin to buy so great a piece. This man is killing his neighbors for their land!

DANFORTH: But proof, sir, proof....

COREY: The proof is there! – I have it from an honest man who heard Putnam say it! The day his daughter cried out on Jacobs, he said she'd given him a fair gift of land.

HATHORNE: And the name of this man.

COREY: I will not give you no name. I mentioned my wife's name once and I'll burn in hell long enough for that. I stand mute. (The Crucible 91, 92)

As a result of keeping silent, Corey is placed under arrest for contempt of court. Furthermore, Proctor presents Mary Warrant's case:

[...] This is Mary Warrent's deposition. I - I would ask you remember, sir, while you read it, that until two week ago she were no different than the other children are today. You saw her scream, she howled, she swore familiar spirits choked her; she even testified that Satan, in the form of women now in jail, tried to win her soul away, and then when she refused - (The Crucible 94, 95)

Being overwhelmed by the deposition Danforth calls for the girls, namely Cheever, Suzanna Wallcott, Mercy Lewis, and Abigail Williams. Abby denies everything and together with her friends pretend to be bewitched by Mary. Proctor is thwarted by the gullibility of the court and confesses to the crime of lechery. Abigail does not exclude having an affair with John but Danforth requests the confirmation of Elisabeth Proctor. Unfortunately, she is not apprised of the circumstances and, despite knowing the truth, to his question "Is your husband a lecher?" answers "No, sir" in order to save her husband's name. (The Crucible 108, 109) However, this destroys Proctor's testimony. Mary panics when the girls pretend to be bewitched by her and reverts:

MARY: My name, he want my name; I'll murder you, he says, if my wife hangs! We must go and overthrow the court, he says - !

PROCTOR: Mister Hale - !

MARY: He wake me every night, his eyes were like coals and his fingers claw my neck, and I sign, I sign....

HALE: Excellency, the child's gone wild.

PROCTOR: Mary, Mary...!

MARY: No, I love God; I go your way no more, I love God, I bless God - Abby, Abby, I'll never hurt you more! (The Crucible 114)

John Proctor is imprisoned due to witchery and, ironically, his wife Elisabeth is released due to her pregnancy.

Act Four takes place 3 months later, a day before the executions. It starts in a "cell in Salem jail" where Reverend Hale and Reverend Parris have been visiting the prisoners. Hale would persuade them to confess in order to save their lives. In addition, Parris tries

to convince Danforth to postpone the hangings for a time. Moreover, Hale begs Elisabeth to prevail upon her husband to confess. For that purpose, she gets the permission to speak with him. She informs him that some of their friends have confessed some died in jail and one of them, Giles Corey, was pressed to death. John Proctor chooses a confession but would not sign it. When asked for an explanation he reacts:

Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life. Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang. How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul, leave me my name! (The Crucible 139)

At the end of the play, John Proctor is going to be hanged with Rebecca Nurse. Elisabeth Proctor states “He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him.” (The Crucible 139)

4.2 The Characters

The author of the characters in *The Crucible* had chosen to infuse a number of identities into one. Therefore they cannot be seen from a historical point of view as accurate. For instance the number of girls testifying in the court was decreased, Abigail was younger (11) in the reality and judges Hawthorn and Danforth represent higher number of judges. Nevertheless, all the main characters played similar or the same role in history. “Regarding the characters of the main protagonists, there was not much to be found,” says Arthur Miller himself.(The Crucible 7, my translation) On the subject of Miller’s deep investigation of the characters of the main protagonists he claims that:

There was little known about the majority of them, apart from what can be deduced from a few letters, the trial record, some contemporary pamphlets and references to their behavior in parameters of different reliability. They can be understood as my own creations depicted according to my best abilities in line with their behavior. (The Crucible 7, my translation)

Basically, there are two major characters, Abigail Williams and John Proctor, who occur throughout the whole book. The other important characters to be mentioned in the analysis are Reverend Parris and Reverend Hale from Beverly.

4.2.1 John Proctor

Proctor is a farmer in his mid-thirties. On one hand, he plays the role of a stable man with strong opinions, well respected and redoubtable in the town. On the other hand, deep inside he sees himself as a cheater and sinner. He is Christian but not as devoted as his wife, Elisabeth. A marginal influence can be the disfavor of the local priest, Reverend Parris. Unlike the townspeople and the court, he knows Abigail's real nature. Hence is the first in the town to know that her accusations are mischief, moreover the first one to try to fight against her.

Proctor's shame and regret for his sins develops as the play climaxes. Formerly, before the hysteria starts, he had an affair with Abigail. In the first act they are arguing and he tells her "...I will cut off my hand before I'll ever reach for you again." (The Crucible 18) after which she gets mad and accuses his wife Elisabeth of witchcraft. Even though she is released due to her pregnancy, John is hanged after vain pursuit of justice. Proctor can be seen as the hero in this play. He refuses to exchange his name for saving his life. He would rather hang than sell himself to the court. He made a terrible mistake once and told himself he would not make one again. Even though his wife forgave him for the affair, the shame of having his name signed on the false confession and hanged on the church door would make it impossible for him to live with himself, moreover, to be a honorable father to his children. Moreover, they want him to confess in front of Goody Nurse to set a good example for her (she is to be hanged with him). Goody's presence though, makes him even more convinced about the absurdity of the confession and realizes it would have an impact on her and other innocent people. Therefore he chooses death. John Proctor pays for his sins with his life at the end of *The Crucible*.

4.2.2 Abigail Williams

Abby is a 17 year old girl who knows what she wants and would not let anything or anyone to stand in her way of getting it. She takes advantage of the opportunity and triggers a hysterical manhunt in the village. Abigail was discharged from Proctor's

house after John's wife found out about the affair but unlike him she feels no guilt and would never confess to it. Her name in the town was pure and she was well aware of it when she started the hysteria. The night when the witch hunts started she was discovered dancing naked and drinking blood in the forest. In a puritan society this was something sinful and unforgivable. For this reason, Abby starts blaming other people. The first victim of her false accusations is Tituba who, according to Abby, made her drink blood. She is surprised at first but when she sees that everybody is on Abigail's side, she confesses to witchcraft. When Abigail sees how this works out she starts playing the victim and threatens the other girls that were with her in the forest to play along. A few days later she takes advantage of the gullible court and takes the opportunity of getting back at Proctor by getting rid of his wife, Elisabeth.

Abigail is a natural leader and very strong character. She enjoys attention and role playing. Nevertheless she does not feel comfortable when being asked questions, especially those about given facts, for instance about dancing in the woods or the affair with Proctor. When exposed to such situation, she tries avoiding the answer by accusing somebody else.

There is no moral in Abigail Williams' story. She goes unpunished. She steals money from her uncle, one who has stood by her side throughout the whole time, and flees. She plays the role of the dictator and manipulator throughout the play. She eliminates people who stand in her way with no remorse. Ironically, the niece of the priest becomes the trigger of the witch-hunting.

4.2.3 Elisabeth Proctor

John Proctor's wife and mother of his two children is the absolute opposite of Abigail. She is, as her husband refers to her, the "goodness." She represents a covenanted Christian woman devoted to her family. Although she is aware of the affair of John's adulterous affair, she still loves him deeply and defends his name publicly.

Goody Proctor knows what Abigail's angle is when Abigail accuses her of witchcraft. "She thinks to take my place, John," she states (*The Crucible* 37). Even though the warrants take her to prison, she is later released due to her pregnancy. Unfortunately, her husband is arrested and about to be hanged. In Act IV when she last speaks with him she reveals her own sins. She finds herself guilty of being a cold wife:

ELISABETH: I counted myself so plain, so poorly made, no honest love could come to me! Suspicion kissed you when I did; I never knew how I should say my love. It were a cold house I kept! (*The Crucible* 78)

Hence, she does not blame her husband of the lechery he committed after all; on the contrary she blames herself for prompting it.

John Proctor depends on his wife's honesty and incapability of lying in ACT III when he confesses to his adultery. He tells the court that she has never lied in her life, "There are them that cannot sing, and them that cannot weep – my wife cannot lie." (*The Crucible* 29). Therefore, she is brought to the court to confirm her husband's lechery. However, her loyalty and love lead her to tell probably the first but fatal lie.

4.3 The allegory

The Crucible is technically an allegory. An allegory is "the rhetorical strategy of extending a metaphor through an entire narrative so that objects, persons, and actions in the text are equated with meanings that lie outside the text." (<http://grammar.about.com>) The events of 1692 Salem served Arthur Miller to write an innovative and an up-to-date drama reflecting on the period of McCarthy's figuratively called "witch-hunt".

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The House Un-American Activities Committee is symbolized in *The Crucible* as the court. The gullible judges refuse to accept any other word except the young girls.’ They close their eyes to reality that Abigail and her friends are changing the facts. When the warrants come for John Proctor’s wife in Act II in *The Crucible*, Reverend Hale tries to promise to him that if Elisabeth is innocent the court will not imprison her. When he is in the middle of the sentence, Proctor interrupts him with grievance:

PROCTOR: If she is innocent! Why do you never wonder if Parris be innocent, or Abigail? Is the accuser always holy now? Where they born this morning as clean as God’s fingers? I’ll tell you what’s walking Salem – vengeance is walking Salem. We are what we always were in Salem, but now the little crazy children are jangling the keys of the kingdom, and common vengeance writes the law! (*The Crucible* 74)

Like McCarthy, Abigail was a persuasive accuser. One accusation led to another and gained him public notoriety, thus he continued utilizing made-up accusations as well as the HUAC throughout his carrier. Abigail and the other afflicted girls started by accusing their enemies and other villagers they knew. Later on, as the outbreak expanded, the girls were not able identify the person they had accused. Reciprocally, they both destroyed lives of innocent people. Those accused by McCarthy faced loss of employment, damaged careers, and in many cases, broken lives. People accused of witchcraft in *The Crucible* faced a sentence of death. Anybody who had the courage to criticize McCarthy was likely to have sympathies with communism. In 1692 people who defended someone accused of witchcraft were highly likely to be in gear with the devil. Moreover, those who defended the victims were generally their neighbors unlike their accusers.

There are three reasons why *The Crucible* can be taken as an allegory about the McCarthy period. Firstly, it was written in the days when the topic of mass accusations was an actual one. Secondly, 17th century Salem provides a “workable analogy” for the American political situation in the early 1950s (Viking 472). And lastly, Arthur Miller was called before the HUAC himself. Although, it was 4 years after he had written the play, this Miller’s unpleasant experience is often connected with the topic of *The Crucible*.

The author of the play leaves unanswered the question about the play as an allegory on 1950s witch hunts though. In an interview with Henry Hewes he says, “I am not pressing a historical allegory here.” McCarthyism though, helped to make the play appear as a metaphor of the witch hunt. (Viking 472)

4.4 The themes

The author of the play himself summarizes the main impulse for writing it in *The New York Times*, August 10, 1952:

I wished for a way to write a play that would be sharp, that would lift out of the morass of subjectivism the squirming, single, defined process which would show that the sin of the public terror is that it divests man of conscience, of himself. It was a theme not unrelated to those that had invested the previous plays. In *The Crucible*, however there was an attempt to move beyond the discovery and unveiling of the hero's guilt, a guilt that kills the personality. (Viking 163)

In *The Crucible*, guilt, which lies in the majority (if not all) of the characters, becomes one of the occurring themes. The author devoted attention especially to that of John Proctor, who struggles throughout the play with dealing with his own sins. He believes that his affair not only destroyed his relationship with his wife, Elisabeth but also his conscience and personality. The passion towards teenage Abigail, who was the opposite of his cold wife, drives him to break his own principles, as well as the principles of the strict Puritan society. He cleans his crime to save his wife's life and ends up in prison himself. He is trapped behind bars with nothing but his conscience. When he finally gets a chance to live for the price of confessing to sins he did not commit he refuses. He cannot take any more guilt and, since the Puritans did not have any other way to wash away their sins, he chooses death. Miller also states that “[...] the central impulse for writing at all was not the social but the interior psychological question, which was the question of that guilt residing in Salem which the hysteria merely unleashed but did not create.” (Viking 165)

Furthermore, the contrast between good and evil is essential in the play and it can also be called another important theme. Each character in the play has good or bad intention, moreover switching from one to another. After a while it is no longer clear which is witch. The town is divided into two “camps” – the good one of the accused and their friends and defenders, and the bad or evil one of the afflicted girls and the court. Later on, the members of the camps get confused about which side is actually good and which is evil. For instance Reverend Hale, who comes to Salem to deal with the Devil, becomes more and more convinced that it is actually the accusers who have evil in them. By the end of the play when Proctor is being hanged not only Hale, but also the ministers recognize their mistake. Nevertheless, it is too late.

Finally, the accusers have various motives such as revenge, greed, jealousy or fear. While some people are protecting themselves and their family, others take advantage of the situation to satisfy their needs, to take revenge on their friends, neighbors and others. Therefore, the last theme of the play to be mentioned is the one of betrayal. Arthur Miller says in his own criticism to the play “It was the fact that Abigail, their former servant, was their accuser, and her apparent desire to convict Elisabeth and have John, that made the play conceivable for me.” (Viking 165) The betrayal of Abigail of the Proctors, her former providers of shelter and income, is the highest one in *The Crucible*.

5. Postwar division of the World

After the Second World War a new division of Europe was established, both geographical and political. The defeated Germany and Austria were separated by the “occupying administration of the victorious powers,” namely the USSR, France, Great Britain and the USA. The territory liberated by the Red Army was recognized as Soviet zones including the Czech and Slovakia lands. (Křížovatky 214)

The world was divided into two ideologically irreconcilable blocs. The Eastern “socialist camp” led by the Stalinist politics of the Soviet Union “proclaimed the dictatorship of the proletariat and the central management of expropriated land and the means of production” and “suppressing the rights and freedom of individuals.” The Western “capitalist camp” comprised the states of North America and Western Europe. It valued liberal politics: “individual freedom, the democratic system, the development of entrepreneurship.” (Křížovatky 214, my translation)

6. Post-war development in Czechoslovakia and the Communists' rise to power

At the end of the Second World War the fate of Czechoslovakia and its political orientation was determined. "Extensive negotiations" were held. The representatives of the Czechoslovak government in London led by Edvard Beneš and the representatives of the Communist Party in exile in Moscow with Klement Gottwald in Košice came up with the Košice Government Programme (*Košický vládní program*) and the first post-war government was established with proportional representation not only of Czechs and Slovaks but also of the political parties. The Communists occupied the key ministries. Only Democrats, National Socialists, Christian Democrats, Communists and Slovak Democrats returned to the Czech political scene. Right wing parties of the First Republic which had not sympathized with the Communist Party were banned. (Křižovatky 216)

Czechoslovakia was re-established on May 9, 1945. Even though the "sovereignty" was recreated after a 6 year occupation, the policy of the Soviet Union was influencing the political parties especially the KSČ. The first step of the public authorities was a violent evacuation of the majority of the German population and confiscating their property. (Kaplan 5)

The government's priority was then "social-economic reform" (agrarian reform and nationalizing and a low class support). The KSČ won the election in May 1946. At the end of 1947 the party started to accomplish their plan to take power. The Communists enforced more reforms and nationalization as well as managed to bring more politicians to their side. In February 1948 President Beneš accepted the dismissal of "non-Communist ministers" in accordance with Klement Gottwald's instructions and named the new government. The path to 40 years of totalitarianism was opened and February 25 was proclaimed a national holiday as "The Day of the Victory of the Working Nation" (*Den vítězství pracujícího lidu*). (Kaplan 7)

7. Political trials

Politically motivated “judicial proceedings” began in spring 1948 with trials against the representatives of the Slovak Democratic Party. They were followed by a series of trials with generals and officers of the Czechoslovak Army. The first one sentenced to death was a Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Czechoslovak Army Heliodor Pika. Until the end of the year 1949 other trials of officers and representatives of non-Communist parties were held. (Jech 11)

7.1 A brief history of political trials

Political trials were conducted by Soviet advisory officers using their experience from the trials in USSR. The cross-examined people were forced by physical and psychical torture to confess the heaviest crimes against republic including high treason. They were also forced to inform against accomplices, followed by punishment (imprisonment or a death sentence). Afterwards, these “felons” were used to intimidate the society to a point of hysteria. (Jech 13)

A similar procedure was applied in the majority of political trials: After a campaign of public condemnation had been launched and a period of being monitored by the Secret Police (StB) had transpired the victim was imprisoned. Additionally, the criticism was reclassified from the ideological plane to the criminal offense of sabotage, followed by a trial. Any self-criticism was reclassified to a confession, and protocols were written and re-written. The prisoners were then manipulated and forced to learn by heart scenarios in the form of questions and answers before the trial began. Everything was crowned by a staged court action and a verdict that was formulated using precedent. (Jech 29, my translation)

The aforementioned procedure was applied in the trial of Dr. Milada Horáková and other representatives of non-Communist parties in 1950. They were accused of such crimes as “a confederacy of sabotage against the republic, high treason, encouragement of West imperialism.” Four people, Horáková among them, were sentenced to death. In the same way the KSČ handled its antagonists the National Socialist Party. Nevertheless, the communists did not hesitate to take victims from people of their own – according to the instructions that had come from Moscow, they constructed a trial of

“the leadership of treasonous conspirators center” (*vedení protistátního spikleneckého centra*) which was said to be headed by a leader of the KSČ, Rudolf Slánský, with the verdict of 10 death and 3 life sentences. (Jech 13, my translation)

“Throughout 1949-1954, 234,000 people were sentenced (in addition about 100,000 were placed in labor camps without a trial), 178 were executed and 244 were shot ‘on the run’ and other contrived occasions.” The prisoners’ rehabilitation had slowly begun in 1954. The following wave of rehabilitation in 1962 had been postponed and it was finished after 1989. (Jech 15, my translation)

8. Church trials

The religious policy of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia intended a single objective – “complete subordination of the Church.” To isolate the Church, “breaking their ties” with the headquarters, located in Western Europe, was expected for the realization of this project. The largest Church, the Catholic, was in the heart of Communist attention, nevertheless other Churches and religious sects were not spared. (Kaplan, Paleček 74)

Weakening the influence of religion in society, limiting the activities of Churches and establishing state control of them were equally important goals of the official policy toward the Church. These general principles throughout 1948-1956 became a permanent source of conflicts and disputes between the Church and the state. A struggle for freedom of religion and rights of Churches to fulfill their social mission stood in the background of the conflicts. First the Catholic church, then gradually others, started to become aware of the dispute with the atheistic regime, and therefore the threat to their own existence. (Kaplan, Paleček 74)

The representatives of the regime and the creators of its religious policy did not respect the social mission of the Church and its spiritual and charitable role. This applied especially to the Catholic Church. The Communist leadership considered it a “well-organized mass power that may adversely affect their own monopoly on power.” (Kaplan, Paleček 75)

8.1 Church policy

Prisons started to fill up with dozens of priests and hundreds of laymen after autumn 1948. Clerics were mostly judged on the “obedience to their superiors” and the failure of “the official regulation”. Believers were imprisoned due to conflicts with the state authorities or “verbal attacks” against the regime. They were a particularly frequent target of the “indiscriminate attacks” of the investigators and supervisors in prisons. In September 1949 the Communists still praised the outcome of the trials with the lower

clergy and believers. A month later the Church policy founders proposed an amnesty for most of the prisoners, not for the sake of justice or compassion, but because they wanted “to use the amnesty” against the Church “dignitaries” who demanded a declaration against the bishops, or at least distance from them. (Kaplan, Paleček 77)

The political trials with clergy and laity during 1948-1949 and the subsequent amnesty were only a preliminary stage in the promotion plan of the Church policy. This stage opened the way to a more serious task – the campaign against the Vatican and the isolation or even exclusion of the Church hierarchy from governance. The Church Commission of the ÚV KSČ (Central Committee) was involved in the preparation of the major religious trials. (Kaplan, Paleček 78, my translation)

One of the purpose-built processes, planned as a big event in the early fifties, failed. The victim died as a result of harsh interrogation while already in custody. In post-war history it is remembered as “Číhošť’s miracle.” The whole case shows the truculent methods the Vatican and its diplomats used in Czechoslovakia against the state and how they thereby violated the domestic church hierarchy. (Komunistický režim a politické procesy v Československu 76, my translation)

8.1.1 December 1949’s events

In December 1949 a miracle that happened in Church during the sermon of Číhošť’s priest Josef Toufar aroused great public interest. Číhošť, located near the district town Ledec nad Sázavou, became a pilgrimage site. At that time and more intensively in January 1950 the situation in the above mentioned town was monitored by the secret police (StB). The ruling Communist power had decided to take this opportunity to deal with the Church and make an example out of Toufar. (Československo 52)

The arrest of Father Toufar took place in 28 January 1950. At the beginning he was interrogated about the incident that happened on Advent Sunday, December 11, 1949. During the traditional Mass in Číhošť’s Church a cross on the altar was seen to have moved. (Československo 52, my translation) The Priest himself did not notice this movement, but he was alerted by some of the congregation the following day. In addition, it was re-confirmed by other participants of the service (a total of 19 believers

confirmed the cross movement). In the subsequent weeks of January, the Church of Číhošť was visited by many predominantly religious people, for example, the Vatican diplomat in Czechoslovakia, Ottavio de Liva.

Priest Toufar denied being the initiator of the cross movement in his testimony. Still, he continued to be interrogated daily while being held in Valdice on February 1, 1950. When these properly conducted interrogations did not lead to the goal of Toufar's confession, the supervisors were instructed to use a "sharper form of interrogation" and called for StB agent Ladislav Mácha and his investigating team. (Československo 1948-1953 53, my translation)

The broken priest Josef Toufar, after inhuman torture by Mácha, signed an interview protocol which described the homosexual abuse of children aged 9 to 12 years. Furthermore, he signed an interrogation protocol which described the "technical implementation of the miracle." (Kalous 11, my translation) The real cause of the cross movement has failed to be explained to this day. According to the language of the forced protocol, the priest wanted to take revenge on the State and the Communist Party for the wrongs against the Church. Everything was supposed to look like a miracle or a revelation. Hence in May or June 1949 he decided to contrive the movement of the cross. "I consider the cross the main character against communism, to say it more accurately, as a symbol in the fight against Marxism-Leninism." (Kalous 11, my translation)

8.1.2 Violent death of the priest and propaganda

The KSČ wanted to use Toufar's confession in its propaganda. For this purpose, on February 23, 1950 the leader of the Second StB sector, Lieutenant Josef Bohemia, came to hear the priest personally and to coerce him by any means to participate in a "Picture Show." Subsequently, despite being in desperate condition, the priest was transported from Valdice back to Číhošť. Even before the filming of the reconstruction of the event, J. Toufar had been complaining about severe pains in the abdomen. Still, he was brought into the pulpit, where he collapsed. He was later transported back to Valdice.

Due to these circumstances, the filming was not completed. The film was shot after Toufar's death in early March 1950 in a very primitive way. (Kalous 13, my translation) Toufar's health condition grew worse during the next two days. On February 25, 1950 a doctor (requested by the StB) diagnosed peritonitis (a duodenal ulcer). As a result, he was transferred to the state nursing home in Prague. There, under a false identity, Toufar underwent surgery. Unfortunately, the medical intervention came too late and Father Josef Toufar died shortly after the operation was begun. (Kalous 13) Since the police wanted to keep everything concerning Josef Toufar's death a secret, the participating medical staff had to subsequently sign a "confidentiality declaration." Mr. Toufar's remains were placed in a "mass grave" in Ďáblice by the secret police, and the coffin was sealed. Relatives who were interested in his fate were not provided any information until 1953. (Kalous 15)

9. Comparison - Political trials in Czechoslovakia vs. witch trials in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*

On one hand there are various features that the political persecutions in 1950s Czechoslovakia and the religious persecutions in 1790s Salem have in common. On the other hand, features that differentiate the aforementioned trials can be found too. This chapter deals with the aspects that connect them, peripherally with those that make them distant.

The first feature that is represented in both the religious and political persecutions is power. The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines power as “the ability to control people or things.” Firstly, in *The Crucible*, power is reproduced in the Court of Oyer and Terminer. In this case it was formally acquired. Judge Hathorne and Deputy Governor Danforth were given the power by the state. Therefore they were officially enabled to decide according to their own beliefs about people's lives. Secondly, power is represented in the group of afflicted girls gathered around Abigail Williams. Since the Puritans' greatest fear was the disobedience of God, Abigail crying witchcraft on townspeople, immediately gets the attention of the court. Moreover, she gains power over those in society that believe that she is fulfilling God's will. In contrast, the power Abigail uses is natural, given by the gullibility of the society. The power in Czechoslovakia's political trials is represented in the Communist Party influenced by the policy of Soviet Union. The party had won the first postwar elections in May 1946 by a landslide. After this official gaining of power, the party took advantage of the enthusiasm of the low classes for collectivization and the euphoria of the nation after the collapse of fascism and emancipation by the Red Army. The KSČ started to use power efficiently to get rid of the enemies of the state. (www.miras.cz)

Secondly, intimidation plays a certain role in both periods. In the aforementioned dictionary, the verb “to intimidate” is explained as “to frighten or threaten [somebody] so that they will do what you want.” Moreover, intimidation is divided into: public (general) and specific (individual) intimidation. Both of them were used intentionally.

In the first type an individual was punished in public view in order to deter others from deviation in the future.

The second type of intimidation was used to correct one's behavior. In the majority of cases, individual intimidation had been used first and when the victim still refused to cooperate, he or she was used for public intimidation so that people started to fear the system and to at least appear loyal. In Act IV in *The Crucible*, John Proctor is going to be hanged with Rebecca Nurse. In order to save his life he is obliged to sign a confession where he admits making a pact with the Devil and witnessing other people with him. The main purpose of the written, signed declaration is that it will be posted upon the church door for the betterment of the village. Proctor refuses to sign it after all and his death sets a forbidding example to other accused people. The court believes that the death of the hanged will serve as a deterrent and more victims will confess.

The Church represented a partial attrition of KSČ's absolutism. For instance, the party demanded everyone do voluntary work on Sundays but some people went to church instead. The communists had waited for an opportunity to devalue it and finally found it in Čihošť. The miracle in the local sanctuary caught their attention and planned to use it as an attack against the system. Their victim, Father Toufar, was not even among the spectators. Nevertheless, it was his sermon during which the miracle they happened. A competent group of investigators had conceived and written down a confession that Josef Toufar had to sign under any circumstances. The major difference between John Proctor and Josef Toufar's cases is that while the intentions of the court in *The Crucible* were good at the beginning, the communist were after one intention: to use the Father in their propaganda and mass intimidation as a deterrent example of the fate of those who would try to take vengeance on the system.

Another common feature of the political and religious trials is conformity. The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines it as "behavior or actions that follow the accepted values of society." Puritans possessed "extremely orthodox and disciplined rules and beliefs." They lead a simple life, according to the Bible. It was against their belief to read other religious or didactic texts. (Dějiny 68, my translation) They believed in destiny which had been "predetermined by" God. Also they strongly believed that the

church is the property of only God and a presence of a higher authority results in the corruption of it. Furthermore, any other religion was incorrect and sympathized with Satan. Moreover, they had strict beliefs on marriage. According to Puritans, marriage was God's will which had to be obeyed in every respect. In such marriage, the husband was the head of the family and the Puritan wife "knew that her duty and responsibility was first towards God, then towards the husband and then towards the children." (www.buzzle.com) The strict morals also occurred in the humbleness of their dressing. (Dějiny 68, my translation) Importantly, Puritans also believed that "reading the Bible is the only way by which they can reach true salvation." (www.buzzle.com)

The intentions of KSČ's new constitution which was established on 9 May, 1946 were to follow the model of Marxism. Here are some major points that the communists proclaimed in the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic: "restriction of concessions; work in favor of the whole; guarantee of the freedom of the person for both men and women; free speech; equal opportunities for everybody; all citizens have rights for education, work and equal reward for performed work." (www.psp.cz). Those are just some of the points of the third article of the constitution that KSČ obeyed from the beginning.

In comparison, both the court's in *The Crucible* and KSČ had meant to protect the society, to make it better. At first, in Arthur Miller's play the court believes that Abigail's confessions are faithful. Since the puritans did not believe in other religions than that of their own, witchcraft meant a connection with Satan and the people afflicted needed to confess in order to gain God's forgiveness. After that, the people would be able to reach salvation. What the court did not want to consider was that Abigail, along with her friends were lying and faking the affliction. Therefore, the accused were innocent but had to confess or be hanged anyway. Once people were charged with witchcraft there was almost no chance of redemption. The accuser was always "holy", and the others along with those who tried to protect them had to conform to the verdict of the court. KSČ forced people to obey their motto "who does not come with us goes against us." One should wonder why it did not say for instance "who does not come with us goes alone", or something similar. The reason is that the communists' black and

white visions of “their nation.” Who did not go with the regime was their enemy and their enemies were properly eliminated as was the case of Rudolf Slánský who was made a scapegoat for the purposes of the ideological foundations of the regime. He was essential in conducting some of the political trials but once he was aware of too much, KSČ took advantage of the instructions from Moscow (to follow their example and organize a trial with a representative of KSČ) and destroyed him with the way he used to remove their enemies. This way, it was guaranteed that nobody, not even the communist representatives would try to “go against them.”

Finally, another aspect connecting the aforementioned proceedings is corruption from the meaning which the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* illustrates as “dishonest or illegal behavior, especially of people in authority.” KSČ’s intentions were to make the lives of the working class better. Another point in their constitution read that “the land belongs to those who work on it.” (www.psp.cz) Unfortunately, the collectivization that they had started shortly after the elections had gotten out of control and the communists started to use it to gain more power and to gain more property for people from their own ranks or to take vengeance on their enemies. A similar situation occurred in Salem when the outbreak started. Some people took advantage of the accusations to take revenge on their enemies or to gain more materialistic power. By the end, agriculturalists were forced to enter JZDs (integrated agricultural co-operatives), farmers and other “remains of capitalist class” were deported to TNPs (forced labor camps), their military equivalent were PTPs (Auxiliary Engineering Corps). (ACTYS 48, my translation) The former vision of freedom and a better future for postwar Czechoslovakia ended up to be a period of fear and conformity. Similarly, the former intentions of the court in *The Crucible* were to help the accused people. Unfortunately, their decision to trust Abigail Williams, the initiator of the hysteria, ended up with the imprisonment and death of innocent people.

It needs to be mentioned that the trials in *The Crucible* and in 1950s Czechoslovakia were held in different ways. First of all, the court in Czechoslovakia was more advanced, which was given by the forwardness of the twentieth century as well as the previously conducted political trials in the Soviet Union that served as a “manual” to

their organizers. In contrast, in Salem at the end of the 17th century, they had to wait until a governor from England came to constitute government and to create the court. Secondly, the court in Czechoslovakia served the leading communist party for the elimination of their enemies and once they chose them there was no going back. Indeed, people in Salem, according to Arthur Miller's play, used power to deal with witchcraft and people accused of it. Nevertheless once they confessed their sins (even if it were not true) they could come back to their usual lives.

10. Conclusion

Though separated by more than two centuries, the Czechoslovak political trials and the witch trials in Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* share some important features. Finding them was the aim of this paper as it tried to assimilate both via specific examples. The main task was to prove the thesis that the plot of the play is very similar to the situation in 1950s when a series of trials were being held in Czechoslovakia. To support the idea, detailed analysis of the plot, main characters and themes of *The Crucible* were made. Furthermore, the history of Salem and Puritanism, which presents the setting of the book was briefly outlined. Moreover, the play was explained as an allegory of McCarthyism in the United States. Concerning the political trials, a short description of the construction was outlined as well as the major historical events and political climate in the First Republic in the years after the Second World War.

Sociologically speaking, Salem in the 17th century was like the Czechoslovak Republic after WWII from a gullibility stand point. For instance, Abigail Williams abused the religious nature of the villagers by claiming that she had been bewitched and had seen people negotiating with the Devil to gain power over the society. Once she had their faith, she (and some other villagers) used it for instance to take vengeance on their neighbours. Similarly, the KSČ abused confidence of the vulnerable Czechoslovak people by promising a new dawn, and using communist ideals to invigorate their power (i.e. confiscation of the private sectors). The general fear of being accused of witchcraft (in Salem) or fraud (in Czechoslovakia) served well for the leading party, KSČ, and the Court of Oyer and Terminer for public intimidation and propaganda. The conformity or obedience of people in Salem was marginally more natural than the one in Czechoslovakia where it was forced by the communist party. One of the reasons for that is that the extent of corruption was much higher in the trials in Czechoslovakia than in Salem. The majority of the communist political or "show" trials were manipulated and constructed in advance. Even though, the fate of the people accused of witchcraft was given at the very moment the accusations were cried out was obvious, it was not given by a pre-arranged questionnaire and script but by the strict rules of the puritan society.

To sum up, the main idea set before writing this paper was to find common features of the Czechoslovak political trials in the 1950s and the witch trials in Arthur Miller's book *The Crucible*. Although, those two issues seem to be dissimilar at first sight, after exploring the contexts a number of common features were found and exemplified.

11. Resumé

Výraz „hon na čarodějnice“ lze interpretovat dvěma způsoby. Za prvé, jako pátrání po důkazech o čarodějnicích a čarodějnictví. Za druhé to může být chápáno jako pronásledování komunistů ve Spojených státech v padesátých letech dvacátého století, které se také označuje názvem Mccarthismus.

Současné město Danvers ve státě Massachusetts bylo v roce 1692, tehdy známé pod názvem Salem, dějištěm honu na čarodějnice. V té době bylo nejbohatším přístavem v Nové Anglii a v 17. století bylo osídleno puritánskou společností. Puritáni, zbožní lidé řídicí se přísnou morálkou a věřící v čistotu církve, připluli na lodi Mayflower do Nové Anglie krátce po anglické revoluci v roce 1630 a založili zde kolonii Massachusetts Bay.

V roce 1692 vypukly v Salemu nejrozsáhlejší čarodějnické persekuce v dějinách Severní Ameriky. Tehdy vše začalo zvědavostí mladých dívek, které se scházely v místním lese, kde experimentovaly s nadpřirozenem. Nikdy se neobjasnilo, co přesně dívky prožívaly. Poté, co se o jejich setkáních dozvěděl místní reverend a poukázal na jejich hříšné jednání, začaly se obviňovat nejprve navzájem a poté se spolčily proti ostatním obyvatelům Salemu a rozpoutaly tak hysterickou štvanici nyní známou pod názvem „Salemské čarodějnické procesy“. Dohromady byly napříč městy a vesnicemi v Massachusettské kolonii zatčeny stovky lidí, 19 z nich oběšeno. V současné době tato historická událost láká do Salámu turisty z celého světa.

V 50. letech 20. století narůstal ve Spojených státech strach z komunismu, vyvolaný expanzivní politikou SSSR v poválečné Evropě. Politické názory Američanů byly neustále zpochybňovány. Senátor Joseph McCarthy rozpoutal v zemi tak zvaný „hon na čarodějnice“ nejen proti americkým politikům, ale také proti intelektuálům, spisovatelům a hollywoodským osobnostem. Falešná obvinění lidí z komunismu ho vynesla na vrchol kariéry a v této taktice také pokračoval až do svého pádu, kdy slovně napadl americkou armádu.

Sněmovní výbor pro neamerickou činnost (HUAC) se zabýval vyšetřováním komunistických činností. Výbor byl zodpovědný za takzvanou Hollywoodskou černou listinu obsahující jména nepohodlných herců, režisérů, spisovatelů apod.. Ti, na základě

podezření, že jejich práce je komunisticky zaměřená, museli pozastavit svou činnost. Jedním z předvolaných byl mimo jiné také Arthur Miller.

Arthur Miller byl jednou z nejvýznamnějších postav amerického moderního dramatu ve 20. století. Ve svých sociálně-kritických hrách se snažil rozbít představy o Americe jako „ráji na zemi“. V současnosti jsou jeho sociální tragédie stále považovány za skutečné.

Jednou z jeho mnoha divadelních her je i alegorie na výše zmíněný politický hon na čarodějnice z roku 1953, Zkouška ohněm. Byla nejen Millerovým nejhranějším dramatem, ale je také považována za jedno z jeho nejlepších a nejaktuálnějších děl.

Drama vychází ze situace v Salemu z února roku 1692, kdy byly tajné schůzky skupinky děvčat odhaleny místním reverendem. Pod tlakem intenzivního výslechu dívky jmenovaly ženy, které byly za jejich chování zodpovědné a ty byly následně zatčeny. V čele skupinky dívek stála Abigail Williams, neteř zmíněného reverenda. Ta, poté co zjistila, jak jednoduché bylo ho obelhat, zneužila situace a důvěřivosti lidí a dál pokračovala s obviněními ostatních. Oběti si vybírala na základě svých potřeb. Například ženu místního farmáře Johna Proctora, Elisabeth, nařkla z čarodějnictví také, protože byla do Johna tajně zamilovaná. Další obyvatelé využili situace a začali obviňovat ostatní z čarodějnictví. Důvodem byla pomsta, žárlivost nebo chamtivost. Rozpoutala se tak hysterie, která skončila popravením Johna Proctora a dalších nevinných lidí.

Podobně tomu bylo i u novodobých procesů. V Evropě došlo po druhé světové válce k novému rozdělení – jak geografickému tak i politickému. Území osvobozená Rudou armádou byla uznána za sovětskou zájmovou zónu, tedy i České země a Slovensko. Svět se rozdělil na dva ideologicky nesmiřitelné bloky – východní a západní. Východní, „socialistický tábor“, byl vedený stalinskou politikou Sovětského svazu a hlásal diktaturu proletariátu a centrální řízení vyvlastněných výrobních prostředků a půdy. Potlačoval práva a svobody jednotlivce. Západní, „kapitalistický tábor“, zastával liberální politiku – svobodu jednotlivce, demokratický systém a rozvoj podnikání.

Po obsáhlých jednáních mezi zástupci československé vlády v Londýně a zástupci KSČ v emigraci byl sestaven Košický vládní program a 1. poválečná vláda. V prvních volbách v roce 1946 s převahou zvítězila KSČ, podporovaná hlavně dělnickou třídou.

Ostatní parlamentní strany byly v názorech na komunisty navrhované reformy nejednotné. Vše vyvrcholilo demisí nekomunistických ministrů v únoru 1948. KSČ převzala všechny mocenské a zákonodárné posty a její vítězství bylo úplné.

Politicky motivovaná soudní řízení začala na jaře 1948. Během pěti let bylo odsouzeno v politických procesech několik tisíc lidí, více než sto bylo popraveno a několik set zastřeleno na útěku. Kromě soudních procesů v pravém slova smyslu existovaly i procesy motivované čistě politicky. Jejich oběti často nebyly obviněny přímo z protistátní činnosti, avšak například z neplnění dodávek potravin, které byly stanoveny záměrně tak vysoko, aby rolníci museli vstoupit do zemědělských družstev. Jejich počet lze pouze odhadovat.

Politické procesy byly řízeny sovětskými poradci a jejich zkušenostmi z procesů v SSSR. Fyzickým týráním a psychickým nátlakem donutili vyšetřované přiznat ty nejtěžší zločiny proti republice, včetně velezrady a udat své tzv. spoluvíníky. Následovaly návrhy vysokých trestů, a vystrašené veřejnosti byly tyto oběti vykresleny jako zločinci. Rodila se tak hysterická štvánice na obviněné.

Takto se postupovalo i v kauze Judr. Milady Horákové a spol.: Ona a její spolupracovníci - národní socialisté byli obžalováni ze záškodnického spiknutí proti republice, velezrady, podpory západního imperialismu, apod.. Tak se KSČ vypořádala s politickými protivníky. Komunisté se však neštíteli ani obětí z vlastních řad a zinscenovali proces s tzv. „vedením protistátního spikleneckého centra v čele s čelním představitelem KSČ, Rudolfem Slánským. Tyto velké procesy předznamenal téměř 40 let vlády jedné strany, její mocenské zvrůle a nesvobody.

Představitelé režimu a tvůrci jeho církevní politiky neuznávali společenské poslání církví, jejich duchovní a charitativní úlohu. To platilo zvláště pro církev katolickou. Komunistické vedení ji považovalo za dobře organizovanou masovou sílu, která může nepříznivě působit na vlastní mocenský monopol.

Jeden z účelových procesů, chystaný jako velký případ na počátku padesátých let, se iniciátorům nezdařil. Hlavní oběť, farář Josef Toufar, zemřel na následky krutých výslechů už ve vyšetřovací vazbě. Do poválečné historie církevních procesů vešel jako „zázrak v Číhošti“. Celý případ měl zhanobit domácí církevní hierarchii a poukázat na metody které používá proti státu.

Prvním společným rysem politických a náboženských procesů je moc, v obou případech získaná důvěřivostí společnosti. V Milerově díle „Zkouška Ohněm“ je zobrazena v soudcích, kterým byla moc zákonem přidělena a následně v Abigail, která získala moc tím, že využila silné puritánské víry v boha, přesněji tvrzením, že vykonává jeho vůli. V československých procesech představuje moc KSČ. Strana ji získala nejprve výhrou ve volbách a dále si ji násilně udržovala a upevňovala. Využila přitom stejně jako Abigail důvěřivostí lidí. V obou případech byla potom moc zneužita k odstrašení nepřátel.

Druhý společný faktor v obou případech představuje zastrašování. V případě divadelní hry „Zkouška ohněm“ byla využita smrt Johna Proctora jako odstrašující případ pro ostatní. Zázrak, který se stal ve Číhošti chtěli komunisté použít jako útok církve na stát. Faráře Toufára proto násilím donutili podepsat předem připravené doznání a ten krátce poté zemřel. „Zázrak v Číhošti“ posloužil KSČ jako odstrašující příklad toho, co se stane protistátním spiklencům.

Dalším společným rysem je „podrobení se“. Puritáni žili velice spořádaný život, následovali přísnou víru a pravidla. Věřili, že jiná náboženství jsou nesprávná a spřízněná s Ďáblem. Podrobení bylo proto jejich denním rituálem, stejně jako u Čechoslováci, kteří za vlády KSČ museli dodržovat přísné zákony nové ústavy vytvořené vládou stranou.

Posledním aspektem, který pojí předem zmíněná období je „korupce“. Není tím myšlen peněžní úplatek, ale morální rozklad společnosti. Stejně jako Abigail ve „Zkoušce ohněm“ posloužila jako návod ostatním vesničanům, jak uskutečnit pomstu nebo získat majetek, KSČ zneužila ideálů Marx-leninismu k vytvoření vlády jedné strany a k nelegálním praktikám potlačujících demokracii; šikanování a odsuzování nevinných lidí a zabavování majetků.

Přestože politické procesy v Československu od čarodějnických procesů ze Salemu dělí více než dvě století, mají mnoho společných rysů.

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