

How Fear Motivates the Characters in Arthur Miller's Play, The Crucible

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At times, fear motivates people to behave unscrupulously. Personal fears instigate some characters in Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* to cry witch. Reverend Parris fears losing his job, Abigail fears prosecution and losing John Proctor, and Tituba fears physical retribution. Fear induces people to defend their personal whims and use their power to harm others.

Reverend Parris' fear of losing his job provokes him to cry witch. Reverend Parris' daughter feigns to be in a coma. When the doctor bade Susanna tell Reverend Parris that he "might look to unnatural things for the cause of it" (9), he denies that possibility because he fears that rumors of witchcraft under his roof would help his "many enemies" (10) to drive him from his pulpit. Later, by supporting the Salem witch trials, Reverend Parris secures his position in the church. When John Proctor brings a deposition to court signed by Mary Warren that calls Abigail and her girls' frauds, Reverend Parris urgently tells Judge Danforth that "they've come to overthrow the court" (88). When Mary Warren cannot faint in court, Reverend Parris accuses her of being "a trick to blind the court" (107). After Abigail pretends that Mary Warren is attacking her, Reverend Parris spurs on

the accusations by telling her to “cast the Devil out” (118). Reverend Parris fears that if Abigail becomes exposed he will be punished for supporting an illegitimate court procedure. When execution day arrives, Reverend Parris fears that the “rebellion in Andover” (127) over hangings will occur similarly in Salem. Reverend Parris pleads to Hathorne that “. . . it were another sort that we hanged till now . . . these people have great weight yet in the town” (127). Reverend Parris’ last attempt at preserv...

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...he government we support. Law enforcers in Salem used preemptive technique by condemning and executing those who came under suspicion of witchcraft without real evidence. Our former president’s policy, the “Bush Doctrine,” condemned people without concrete evidence or giving them fair trials. Iraq was invaded and searched, but no weapons of mass destruction ever found. With adequate amount of fear and suspicion, the government will launch potentially devastating “preemptive war” on suspected aggressors. In [The Crucible](#), every time one witch confesses many more appear, just as international aggression by U.S. forces breeds more international aggressors. What does our fetish for the aggressive repression of our enemies say about society and of what we learn from history? Are we incapable learning from our mistakes, or are we just addicted to hatred and violence?

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