Theatre as Truth Practice: Arthur Miller's The Crucible

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Chapter 5
The Crucible and the Production of Fear in the Contemporary World: The Future and Persistency in Culture

As indicated in the introduction, for the purposes of our study, I consider a work of art to be both an analytical and a productive tool that organizes, afflicts or feeds a certain culture. In chapters 1 and 2, I used Miller's play to analyse the relations between a present and an historical past. There I used the term, coined by Mieke Bal, of preposterousness. Although the play was clearly written centuries after ('post') the events in Salem, it was through the play that we could connect to those events. In this sense the play was 'before' (pre-) the past itself. The dynamic of preposterousness served, I argued there, to work through the past from the viewpoint of the present. The play, then, does not capture or describe an historical reality but, in its relation to the past, it serves as an analysis in the sense of a psychoanalysis, as a 'working through.' The things of the past are not 'past' as a consequence. They are alive in an enacted or dramatized past, and need to be relived for the purpose of a cure. In chapters 3 and 4, we saw that such a cure does not really materialise on the level of the play's contemporaneous present, at least not on a collective level.

With respect to its own contemporaneous present, the play serves not only as an analysis of the society in which it was written and performed, it also serves as an intervention. In this context, the Salem witch hunt functions as an allegory for McCarthy's communist hunt. However, due to the nature of allegory, this does not 'resolve' anything. In fact, as we saw, the play is both an analysis of the society and an intervention in it, but it also contributed to the production of fear that troubled it. In its allegorical re-enactment of the past, the play remains partly caught in its tropical metaphorical closure. As I argued, it is as much part of the problem as it is its solution. Yet the trope of metonymy also helps the play to open up history in a battle for hegemony.

In the following chapter and conclusion, I will take a look at how this play from the past can be used as an analytical tool for our present, at the beginning of the twenty-first century. From the vantage point of its moment of genesis, I will therefore consider its future application, or rather: its future performative powers. These powers may manifest themselves when crossing historical and cultural borders, as is the nature of 'world literature' according to

Damrosch.[312] In his view, world literature is characterized by its potential to become more meaningful through its historical and cultural translation. In the context of globalization and the transnational reach of national literature, Damrosch observes: 'if world literature is defined as literature of genuinely global scope, whether in authorial intention or in its circulation among readers, then we are only just now seeing the birth of this literary form whose true history lies in the future rather than in the past'.[313] From a thematic point of view, *The Crucible* embodies indeed a general phenomenon of the production of fear and it remains cross-culturally of relevance (if we keep in mind that 'general' is understood, here, in the sense that the play is not bound to particular situations but transcends them). In some aspects the play may indeed be an example of world literature, and as such it is also a play 'waiting for the occasion'. Here, however, I will examine it more in the context of its participation in a distinct culture that certainly did not and does not remain the same over time but that appears to be troubled by recurring patterns. The pattern that I am concerned with, as may be clear by now, is the socio-cultural production of fear in the US, a production that happens for political purposes, fuelled by religiously defined dichotomies of good and evil.

In order to deal with this, I will first consider what has been a powerful theory to explain cultural persistency, and determine how this theory is problematic in relation to works of art. I will then move to the issue of why in the last decades the neo-liberal, or better neo-conservatives, in the US found the German lawyer Carl Schmitt to be a major source of inspiration and which persistent cultural dynamic underpinned this revival. Subsequently, I will concentrate on a model that can explain a culture's persistency in terms of being haunted by ghosts from the past. Here I will follow and divert from a path was already described by Erin Graff Zivin in *Figurative Inquisitions: Conversion, Torture and Truth in the Luso-Hispanic Atlantic*, especially the chapter 'Allegory and Hauntology'.

5.1 Long-Term Cultural Patterns in the US Socio-Cultural Environment

In its study of persistency in culture, Geert Hofstede's *Culture's Consequences* has had profound influence on the development of cross-cultural studies within psychology, in organisation studies and in the social sciences more generally.

[312] David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2003), p. 110.
[313] David Damrosch, 'Toward a History of World Literature', *New Literary History* 39.3 (2008), p. 483.

Hofstede, who was working with the multinational corporation IBM in the sixties as an organisation sociologist and psychologist, researched the cultural differences that were apparent in its 71 subsidiary locations globally where it had offices and factories.[314] The outcome of this research, after a survey of forty different nations, was that Hofstede devised five dimensions that can characterise a culture. They include: the so-called power distance index, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation. Hofstede's takes the view, as Peter B. Smith remarks, that cultures are not superficial or easily changeable entities but that they are deeply embedded in people's psyches, bodies, practices and organisations and, apart from certain exceptions, they are strongly resistant to change. According to him, we are programmed by our culture in early life and the various elements within a national culture typically serve to sustain and enhance its coherence.[315]

Hofstede's observations of cultural dimensions based upon national data were criticized by scholars like Rachel Baskerville and Brendan McSweeney. Baskerville reviews the problems in Hofstede's model on the following points: '(i) the assumption of equating nation with culture (ii) the difficulties of, and limitations on a quantification of culture represented by cultural dimensions and matrices; and (iii) the status of the observer outside the culture'.[316] Baskerville points at Hofstede's equating national data with the study of such an abstract phenomenon as culture. Secondly it is problematic for her to imagine a quantification of national cultures through arithmetic data and matrices as Hofstede does. For her, the statistical measure of culture amounts to a limiting analysis of an epic phenomenon called culture. Lastly, Baskerville also finds Hofstede's approach lacking in the positioning of the observer, as someone who appears to stand outside a culture. I agree with much of this criticism, and yet find Hofstede's model relevant in order to explain the persistency in culture. I will use his model heuristically then, not so much to confirm it as to narrow it down to the issue where and how cultural persistency, or cultural incoherence, may be involved.

Since his retirement Hofstede's work has been continued by his son, Gert Jan Hofstede, and this is how, together, they define culture on their website:

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[314] Geert Hofstede and Robert R. McCrae, 'Personality and Culture Revisited: Linking Traits and Dimensions of Culture', *Cross-Cultural Research* 38.1 (2004), p. 61.
[315] Peter B. Smith, 'Culture's Consequences: Something Old and Something New', *Human Relations*: 55.1 (2002), p. 122.
[316] Rachel F. Baskerville, 'Hofstede Never Studied Culture', *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 28.1 (2003), p. 1.

> Our shared human nature is intensely social: we are group animals. We use language and empathy, and practice collaboration and intergroup competition. But the unwritten rules of how we do these things differ from one human group to another. 'Culture' is how we call these unwritten rules about how to be a good member of the group. Culture provides moral standards about how to be an upstanding group member; it defines the group as a 'moral circle'. It inspires symbols, heroes, rituals, laws, religions, taboos, and all kinds of practices – but its core is hidden in unconscious values that change at a far slower rate than the practices. We tend to classify groups other than our own as inferior or (rarely) superior. This applies to groups based on national, religious, or ethnic boundaries, but also on occupation or academic discipline, on club membership, adored idol, or dress style. In our globalized world most of us can belong to many groups at the same time.[317]

For my analysis of *The Crucible* the issues that interest me the most in the above definition are, first of all, the moral aspect of culture, defined in terms of required behaviour, and the difference between the practices that may change over time and a 'hidden core' with 'unconscious values' that changes at a far slower rate but which explains the relative persistency and stability in cultures.

In Hofstede's analysis, cultural programming takes place with this hidden core as its engine, and the previously mentioned five dimensions define this programming. One of these dimensions is power distance, which is the 'extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally'.[318] Fundamental units such as family, school, places of worship, etc. represent the institutions in society whereas the community and organisations correspond to people's work places. This definition represents inequality (more versus less), as the power distance is defined from below, not from above. It suggests that its followers as much as its leaders endorse a society's level of inequality. This is to say, in an almost Foucauldian sense, that leadership is complemented by a palpable presence of subordination by the ruled since authority requires subservience and obedience to be matched with it to actualise a scene of power. In Hofstede's

[317] Geert Hofstede and Gert Jan Hofstede, <http://www.geerthofstede.nl//>. [accessed 4 March 2014].
[318] Geert Hofstede and Gert Jan Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, revised 2nd edn (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005), p. 46.

findings, the correlations of the PDI (Power Distance Index) with geographic, economic and demographic country indicators, through comparisons of educational systems and the consideration of historical factors, lead to the suggestion of some sort of causal chain regarding the origins of national differences. An analysis of political systems, religious life, and philosophical and ideological thinking in various countries shows differences in the PDI which are interpreted as consequences of power distance norm differences that feed back into the norm and support it.[319]

Compared to a global average of 55, US scores 40 on the Power Distance Index, which indicates a greater equality between the social levels, including governments, socio-cultural organizations, and even within the families.[320] This orientation, as Hofstede observes, reinforces a cooperative interaction, across power levels, and creates a more stable cultural environment. This does not immediately accord well, however, with *The Crucible*, in which a general hierarchical power system orchestrates the stream of events between the girls, the common people, the judiciary and the church officials. In the play, for instance, Ezekiel Cheever's words to Giles Corey and the Proctors reveal an important power distance:

> You know yourself I must do as I'm told. You surely know that, Giles. And I'd as lief [sic] you'd not be sending me to Hell. I like not the sound of it, I tell you; I like not the sound of it. (*He fears* Proctor, *but starts to reach inside his coat.*) Now believe me, Proctor, how heavy be the law, all its tonnage I do carry on my back tonight. (*He takes out a warrant*.) I have a warrant for your wife.[321]

The quote may illustrate how American egalitarianism not always accords well with the force of a certain form of law. There is a principal difference between 'doing what you are told' by some sort of imperial force, say a king or a religious authority, or considering oneself as the subject of law. In this case, Cheever feels entrusted with responsibility and power to discharge his role as a servant and custodian of the legal system, whose legitimacy is of course questioned by the people who are subjected to its power, although this does not

[319] Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values* (London: SAGE Publications, 1980), pp. 92-93.
[320] Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences,* p. 104.
[321] Miller, *The Crucible,* p. 68.

change things for the better. When subordination to power is realised through the force and authority of the law of the land, the phenomenon of McCarthyism does not correspond well with Hofstede's PDI index for the US.

Hofstede's second cultural dimension is individualism, which is contrasted with collectivism. It rests on individuals being integrated into groups and is found 'in societies where the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family'.[322] Hofstede states that the relationship between the individual and the collective in human society is not only a matter of ways of living together, but it is intimately linked to societal norms (in the sense of value systems of major groups of the population). It therefore affects both people's mental programming and the structure and functioning of many other institutions besides the family: educational, religious, political and utilitarian. The central element in our mental programming involved in this case is our concept of self. That is why any traditionalist would hardly think of himself as individualistic. Hofstede compares the Western style of thinking with, for instance, the Chinese style whilst pointing out that the Western concept of individual personality is distinct from the concept of society. In contrast, the Chinese style entails the use the concept of 'human constant' which includes the person himself in addition to his intimate societal and cultural environment which makes his existence meaningful. That is why there is tendency in Chinese culture to modify social and individual views more easily in terms of the environment.[323] Or, to give another example, Hofstede also compares paradigms of religious and ideological conversion, generally, in Western and Chinese societies. In the West conversion is a highly individualistic act. According to Hofstede, in modern Chinese society, the ideological conversion is collectively defined on account of an overarching communitarian culture.

Because they are tied to value systems shared by the majority, issues of collectivism versus individualism carry strong moral overtones. Americans tend to see their own culture as individualistic and this individualism is interpreted as a major contributor to the greatness and moral superiority of the United States. Accordingly, in Hofstede's view, individual members of its population are self-reliant and look after themselves and their close family members. That is why, generally speaking, there is a so-called 'I'-consciousness in American culture, with a tendency towards self-orientation, autonomy, variety, pleasure and

[322] Hofstede and Gert Jan Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations,* p. 76.
[323] Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences,* p. 215.

individual financial security. Yet in terms of values, the standards are desired and expected to apply to all, i.e. across the board. Some trace the philosophic source of this American individualism to Lockean liberalism. In Luis Hartz's opinion, for instance, John Locke's ideas on individualism and the social contract theory anticipated the American liberal experiment and these liberal ideas were put into practice in American political thought, rhetoric and culture with reference to reconciling majority rule versus minority rights.[324] Later this vision encountered competition from those who placed republicanism and American civic virtue centre stage such as, for instance, Mark E. Kann, a political scientist (and an expert in gender-based analysis of American society).[325] Whichever analysis one chooses, individualism, if we follow Geert and Gert Jan Hofstede's analysis, became part of America's 'hidden core.'

Yet, with regard to this dimension as well, *The Crucible* seems to depict a world that is markedly different in first instance. Hale, the lone sane voice of the people corroborating with the legal and theological order of Salem, also succumbs to the rule of majority while giving credence to all the accusations in search of evidence:

> *Pleading:* Nurse, though our hearts break, we cannot flinch; these are new times, sir. There is a misty plot afoot so subtle we should be criminal to cling to old respects and ancient friendships. I have seen too many frightful proofs in court – the Devil is alive in Salem, and we dare not quail to follow wherever the accusing finger points![326]

Although Hale attempts to break away from the traditional culture of kinship and communal norms since he vowed to serve the law, he fails to use his individual acumen to correctly interpret the motives of the accusing girls and the people he serves. He is trying to be the most modern voice of the community by calling his times 'new times' and offering to divorce himself from the unwritten local norms of favouritism based on kinship and patronage. His stance can hardly be called 'individualistic,' however, since his personal observations and

[324] Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World,, 1955), pp. 128-29.
[325] Mark E. Kann, 'Individualism, Civic Virtue, and Gender in America', *Studies in American Political Development* 4 (1990), p. 52.
[326] Miller, *The Crucible,* p. 67.

assessment of the victims' statements in court are sufficient proof in his eyes to give full credence to any evidence that matches the generally required picture.

In contrast, there certainly are highly individualistic voices in the community like those of Proctor, Rebecca Nurse and Giles Corey. Here, *The Crucible* does fit the pattern, and Miller himself observes that the force of the individual can withstand almost anything.[327] That being said, in modern times as well, individualistic voices of dissent in US political culture have either been deemed unpatriotic, given scant attention, or have been met with substantial pressure and threats. In fact, Hannah Arendt, displeased with state suppression of individual responsibilities in the 1960s in the States, for instance in the case of Daniel Ellsberg, considered this to be a fundamental threat to what the United States stood for.[328] Accordingly, in *The Crucible*, any individual enquiry about phantoms of fear is made virtually impossible.

Hofstede's third dimension in national cultures is masculinity as opposed to femininity. He sees the duality of the sexes as a fundamental fact that different societies deal with in different ways. The gender-based role distribution prevailing in a particular society is transferred by socialisation through family, school and peer groups, and through the media. Generally speaking, in most contemporaneous societies, according to Hofstede, the predominant socialisation pattern is for men to be more assertive and for women to be more nurturing. In Hofstede's study, anthropology, psychology and political science confirm the male assertiveness/female nurture pattern. In this context, he links his research to the McClelland's review of U.S psychological literature for evidence of psychological differences between the sexes. In the US data, boys and men universally tend to be more assertive, whereas girls and women are more sensitive to social interdependence. Similarly, in his review of Spenner and Featherman's study of US sociological literature, Hofstede reveals a strong relationship between sex and achievement ambitions and shows lower ambitions for women.[329] In Hofstede's analysis, the US scores 62, compared to a world average of 50. This indicates that the country experiences a higher degree of gender role differentiation. Male domination in society and its power

[327] Jeffrey D. Mason, *Stone Tower: The Political Theater of Arthur Miller* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008), p. 6.
[328] Daniel Ellsberg is a former American military analyst who, whilst employed by the RAND corporation in 1971, publicized top-secret Pentagon papers by giving them to *The New York Times* and other papers to disclose American policy decisions in Vietnam. For a detailed account, see Hannah Arendt, *Crises of the Republic: Lying in Politics; Civil Disobedience; on Violence; Thoughts on Politics and Revolution* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1972), pp. 3-47.
[329] Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences,* p. 263.

structure require a tendency in female population to grow more assertive and competitive in emulating the male role model.

Regarding this dimension, Wendy Schissel has studied Miller's depiction of gender in her feminist reading of the play, and she concludes that the text testifies of straightforward *gynecophobia* – a fear and distrust of women that is both implicit and explicit in Puritan America. Tituba, the Caribbean woman enslaved by Reverend Parris, is the first scapegoat and is simultaneously the victim of complicated gynecophobia and xenophobia. Proctor's denigrating of Mary Warren on a number of occasions testifies to an androcentric morality in Puritan society and the household.[330] Here we can see an almost one-to-one relationship between the play and Hofstede's cultural dimension of gender.

The fourth dimension in national cultures is 'uncertainty avoidance' and Hofstede observes that uncertainty about the future is a basic fact of human life. His research findings reveal that tolerance for uncertainty varies considerably among people in subsidiaries in different countries. The three indicators that are used in this respect are rule orientation, employment stability and stress. The three together produce a country's Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI).[331] In Hofstede's opinion, knowing that there is life after death is the believer's ultimate certainty which allows him to face uncertainties in this life. The line separating 'defending against uncertainties' from 'accepting them' is fluid; many of our defences aimed at creating certainty are not really doing that in an objective sense, but they allow us to sleep peacefully. That is why different societies adapt to uncertainty in different ways. The layers of difference do not simply alternate between traditional and modern societies but they exist in modern societies too. Hofstede observes that the ways of coping with uncertainty are part of a society's cultural heritage and are transferred and reinforced through key institutions such family, school and the state. They are reflected in the values that are collectively held by members of a given society. Their roots are non-rational, and they may lead to collective behaviour which may seem aberrant and incomprehensible to members of other societies. In Hofstede's study, US scores 46, compared to the world average of 64.

Puritan society in 1692 was beset with uncertainty and did not merely tend towards control but demanded it. The best remedy to fight uncertainty, embodied in the threats of evil spirits, consisted in relying on the institutions of

[330] Wendy Schissel, 'Re (dis)covering the Witches in Arthur Miller's The Crucible: A Feminist Reading', *Modern Drama* 37.3 (1994), pp. 461-69.
[331] Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences,* p. 153.

the judiciary and the executive. The cultural dynamic of this New England society was different from that of its cultural 'ancestor' in England. To avoid the uncertainties of nature or of conflicts of faith and religion, a communitarian lifestyle was encouraged, dissent was discouraged and full trust was required in the sovereignty of law. Whereas in the history of continental Europe the concept of sovereignty was derived from a divine source and was institutionally supported as such by the Roman Catholic church, the absence of feudal nobility and king, or an established church, in America required the sovereignty of the law. Therefore maintaining the rule of law was a priority for any authority or statesman.[332]

The Salem trials are maybe one of the most clear-cut instances of judicial activism in response to the agency of fear and uncertainty that would take American society hostage on a regular basis in the future, as described in the previous chapter on McCarthyism. Litigation can be seen as a persistent pattern in American culture, and is used to overcome uncertainties in the present for the future. For now, however, it forces us to think about the explanatory power of Hofstede's model. Does it also deal with America's political culture, or should we consider the dynamic between American culture at large and its political culture in terms of a form of schizophrenia? According to Hofstede, for instance, America should be strong in dealing with uncertainty.

Let me try to answer this question on the basis of the fifth and the final dimension: a culture's long-term orientation versus short-term orientation. This was the outcome of a study carried out among students in twenty-three countries around the world with the help of Chinese scholars who designed a questionnaire to this end. The core value proved to be 'virtue' in the context of so-called long-term versus short-term orientation.[333] These orientations are characterised by:

[332] According to *The Cambridge History of Law in America*, 'in America law is king'. See Michael Grossberg and Christopher Tomlins (eds), Editors' Preface, *The Cambridge History of Law in America: Volume 3, The Twentieth Century and After (1920-)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. xi.

[333] In a later work entitled *Exploring Culture. Exercises, Stories and Synthetic Exercises* (Yarmouth, MA: Intercultural Press, 2002), Gert Jan Hofstede explains that this virtue aspect was based on questionnaires designed by Asians and that 'Western minds typically find the virtue aspect harder to grasp than they do the other aspects', p. 109.

High Long Term	Low Long Term (i.e. Short Term)
emphasis on persistence	emphasis on quick results
relationships ordered by status	status not a major issue in relationships
personal adaptability important	personal steadfastness and stability important
face considerations common but seen as a weakness	protection of one's face is important
leisure time not too important	leisure time important
save, be thrifty	spend
invest in real estate	invest in mutual funds
relationships and market position important	bottom line important
good or evil depends on circumstances	belief in absolutes about good and evil

(Source: http://www.andrews.edu/~tidwell/HofstedeLongTerm.html[334])

Both the positively and the negatively rated values of this dimension can be found in the teachings of the most influential Chinese philosopher Confucius, who lived in 500 BC. And these values also apply to countries without a Confucian heritage. The United States was included by Hofstede in the group of countries that had the lowest Long Term Orientation (LTO) for the US at 29, compared to the world average of 45. This low LTO ranking indicates, for instance, society's belief that spending is better than saving. Hofstede links this characteristic, surprisingly without much explanation, to a strong belief in the absolutes of good and evil. Regarding this dimension *The Crucible* evidently testifies of a normative society that has a fascination with establishing the truth and a belief in absolutes about good and evil.

As noted at the beginning of this section, Hofstede's observations about cultural dimensions were criticised by scholars, such as like Rachel Baskerville. However, Hofstede did not respond to Baskerville's critique in isolation. In a more general way and taking into consideration five standard criticisms of his work, which he listed in his 2001 edition of *Culture's Consequences*, he explains:

[334] Geert Hofstede, 'Hofstede: Long Term/Short Term', <http://www.andrews.edu/~tidwell/HofstedeLongTerm.html>, [accessed 12 June 2014].

> Baskerville's comments deal primarily with point 2: Nations are not the best units for studying cultures, to which my answer was: True, but they are usually the only kind of units available for comparison and better than nothing. Nation states cannot be equated with national cultures, but does this render conclusions about cultural differences based on nation-level data invalid? Could it be that 90% of such conclusions still hold? And isn't differences between nations precisely what accounting and business research are usually concerned with?[335]

Hofstede thus admits that nation, or rather: nation-state, and culture cannot be equated but since at global level nation-state still exists as a unit to distinguish people from different geographies and cultures, it remains a most convenient and available unit to study different cultures. Geographic boundaries, of course, do not finely demarcate cultures across the globe but Hofstede observes that, in spite of local differences, the national culture of a specific nation state under study is always different from other states. In addition, his five cultural dimensions play a definitive role in defining a nation's culture when compared with another nation. Hofstede further contends that most of his research and conclusions about cultures still hold true because the nation-state is the only valid and strong unit which allows him to observe the variable cultural dimensions *statistically*.

As my comparison with *The Crucible* has shown, there is definitely no one-to-one relation between this play, or art in general, and a nation-state's culture. The reason is that art is never simply the expression of a culture. On the other hand, on a number of points it resonated rather strongly with Hofstede's analysis and, amongst these, I consider the absolutes of good and evil to be pivotal. They will help to see why Carl Schmitt could so easily be transposed to the US context between the 1990s and 2010, at a time when the production of fear resurfaced.

[335] Geert Hofstede, 'What is Culture? A Reply to Baskerville', *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 28 (2003), p. 812.

5.2 *The Crucible* as a Work of Art Operating Through Time: Pre-diction and the Schmittean Revival

In *The Crucible,* Danforth, the main lawyer in the Salem witch trials, asserts his authority when he invokes the binary difference between the leagues of good and evil:

> But you must understand, sir, that a person is either with this court or he must be counted against it, there be no road between. This is a sharp time, now a precise time – we live no longer in the dusky afternoon when evil mixed itself with good and befuddled the world. Now, by God's grace, the shining sun is up, and them that fear not light will surely praise it. I hope you will be one of those.[336]

It is an often quoted passage, and rightly so.[337] It is often quoted precisely because what is being said sounds, in the cultural worldview of the US, somehow logical, almost natural, which is the hallmark of ideology. It is evident from Danforth's remarks that his worldview comprises two finely partitioned leagues of deific benevolence and diabolical evil.[338] They may explain why the quote from *The Crucible* is similar, almost to the detail, to what George W. Bush said in his address to the Joint Session of Congress in 2001. After the 9/11 attacks, he called on every nation in every region of the world to take sides with either good or evil in the ensuing global war on terror: 'Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists'.[339]

At the end of the play, this sharp wedge between the forces of good and evil goes deep enough to even legitimize violent legal verdicts for the sake of safeguarding community unity and purity in Salem. The climax occurs when Danforth, in the name of absolute morality, triumphantly executes John Proctor, Rebecca Nurse and other innocent people. The persistence of cultural practices like the production of fear and the Manichean politics in America in those times, is a fine paradigm of Roberto Esposito's theory, namely that the desire of modern societies to be healthy and pure must lead to a thanatopolitics. This

[336] Miller, *The Crucible,* p. 86.
[337] See, for instance, Albert Wertheim, 'The McCarthy Era and the American Theatre', *Theatre Journal* 34.2 (1982), p. 219; Fender, p. 96.
[338] Amy D. Ronner, '*The Crucible*, Harvard's Secret Court, and Homophobic Witch Hunts', *Brook Law Review* 73 (2007-08), p. 217.
[339] George W. Bush, 'Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People', *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 25 (2001-02), p. xxii.

politics works on the principle that life defends itself and develops only through progressive enlargement and expansion of the circle of death.[340] Stuart J. Murray who, with reference to Michel Foucault's famous postmodern concept of biopolitics that denotes modern societies' social and political power over life[341], further clarifies it:

> Foucault marks the important shift from classical biopower to modern biopolitics. Classical biopower is summed up as the sovereign decision 'to take life or let live,' whereas modern biopolitics is conceived as 'the power to "make" live and "let" die.' The decision to kill and let live is replaced with a productive biopolitics that is twofold, that 'makes live' *and* 'lets die'. Death becomes a consequence ─ a necessary part ─ of living. Such death is too easily elided and dismissed. Nobody is killed, at least not directly, and nobody's hands are bloodied, at least not that we can see; the crimes are outsourced to penal colonies through 'extraordinary rendition' become ordinary, obfuscated by state bureaucracy, and covered up by one media spectacle after another. These deaths are never caused as such; officially, they are merely 'allowed,' a passive event, collateral damage. But biopolitical logic requires them. In order that 'we' may live, live well and live fully, 'they' must die, the distinction between the virtuous citizen and the other excluded as bare life, disposable life.[342]

As Murray expounds, Foucault analyses a remarkable shift in the concept of biopower to biopolitics since antiquity in Western culture. In antiquity, political power rested with the patriarch in the family to grant life to newborns. Later in European societies, after the revival of Roman law, the sovereign or the monarch was entitled to take the life of his subjects or to let them live. The sovereign, as Foucault argues, was granted the right to rule over the masses in order to ensure protection and continuity of their lives. Hence preservation and protection of life was the essence and guarantee of the social contract between

[340] Roberto Esposito, *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*, Posthumanities Series (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), p. 110.
[341] Michel Foucault refers to biopolitics as the modern societies' social and political control over life.
[342] Stuart J. Murray, 'Thanatopolitics: Reading in Agamben a Rejoinder to Biopolitical Life', *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 5.2 (2008), pp. 204-5.

the classical sovereign and the people. Yet, while navigating through history, Foucault observes that over time sovereign power has undergone gradual transformations in terms of sophistication of mechanisms, techniques and technologies for controlling life and death of populations. He argues, for instance, that in the seventeenth century the nature of the exercise of power was disciplinary and was intended for a cost-effective use of labour through disciplinary control of the human body. It required spatial distribution of individual bodies, involving the individuals' separation, alignment, serialisation but also surveillance in a hierarchical system. In the second half of the eighteenth century, according to Foucault, this disciplinary power underwent transformation and was no longer applied to man-as-body but to living man, to man-as-living-being or man-as-species.[343] In short, modern Western culture has seen governments exercise biopolitical techniques in order to maintain classical sovereign powers to 'make live' and 'let die' without any apparent sense of accountability for their apathy regarding the dead. These techniques are used for the subjugation of bodies and for controlling populations.

However, there is a reversal of sorts in modernity when political power promises to be protective, to preserve, control, prolong and strengthen life at the expense of permitting death elsewhere, as its consequence. Through this intensive conflict, which has to ensure an optimum and secure life in modern western societies, death is outsourced and wilfully 'allowed' to occur through co-opted violence abroad, even if it means, for instance, arbitrary arrests and the extrajudicial transfer of suspects to far-off localities where torture happens as a matter of course. Death is allowed to take place in those places without any formal legal accountability because it guarantees the continuation of life in other places. In a sense, biopolitical logic requires these deaths, as the deaths of 'others' are a guarantee for 'us' living.

In contrast with Geert Hofstede's analysis that US culture would be able to cope with a high degree of uncertainty, I see uncertainty avoidance as a key cultural dimension in the context of the United States' adaptive warfare strategies in modern times, that focus on a more proactive approach. Donald Rumsfeld, for instance, stated in a 2002 speech:

[343] Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the College de France 1975-76*, trans. by David Macey, ed. by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (London: Allen Lane, 2003), pp. 241-42.

> We must transform not only our armed forces but also the Department that serves them by encouraging a culture of creativity and intelligent risk-taking. We must promote a more entrepreneurial approach to developing military capabilities, one that encourages people, all people, to be proactive and not reactive, to behave somewhat less like bureaucrats and more like venture capitalists.[344]

In the twenty-first century, modern Western warfare is more sophisticated and is conducted with an idea of risk and casualty aversion, not unlike the liberal way of governance that is constantly changing and adapting in the face of the complexity discourses, networks and information as a result of a change in the concept of life itself.[345] The media and information networks work to the advantage of this biopolitics to cover these deaths up with discourse and illusory spectacles as the 'other' party's collateral damage for preserving the lives of their own 'worthy of living' citizens. Thus modern biopolitics indeed marks a shift away from the sovereign's biopower of old: from 'taking life' to 'making live' and from 'letting live' to 'letting die.' On this count, in modernity there is a corresponding radical difference in the value of life of different people.

In the context of *The Crucible,* this is comparable to the distinction between the good that is supposed to be protected and made to live and the evil that has to die elsewhere, because it curbs the sovereigns' hold on power. For instance, Danforth's statement in Act 4 that he would hang a thousand people to uphold Biblical law but would not stumble in front of retaliation is an equivalent form of cognitive conviction to sustain good and eradicate evil.[346] As to the play's future applicability, this work of art almost predicts how the value of people's lives will change with time, as Foucault's concept of biopolitics made clear.

The paradigmatic nature of *The Crucible* becomes chillingly evident in relation to the rebirth of Carl Schmitt's thoughts on the political in neo-conservative circles in the US. In essence, the collaboration between the judiciary and the executive in Salem, fuelled by a Manichean dichotomy of good and evil with the aim of strengthening their political grip on power, is theoretically reflected in the writings of Carl Schmitt, a legal scholar during the

[344] Rumsfeld quoted by Pat O'Malley, 'Resilient Subjects: Uncertainty, Warfare and Liberalism', *Economy and Society* 39.4 (2010), p. 501.
[345] O'Malley, p. 502.
[346] Miller, *The Crucible,* p. 117.

Weimar Republic. In relation to Miller's play, it is relevant to examine how Schmitt's idea of the political, as Andrew Norris observes, is based on an emphasis on the conceptual autonomy of the political.[347] Schmitt categorically distinguishes the political from the economic, the technological and the legal and also criticizes liberalism for muddying and obscuring these distinctions. He states:

> The distinction of friend and enemy denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or dissociation. It can exist theoretically and practically, without having simultaneously to draw upon all those moral, aesthetic, economic, or other distinctions. The political enemy need not be morally evil or aesthetically ugly; he need not appear as an economic competitor, and it may even be advantageous to engage with him in business transaction. But he is, nevertheless, the other, the stranger; and it is sufficient for his nature that he is, in a specifically intense way, existentially something different and alien, so that in the extreme case conflicts with him are possible. These can neither be decided by a previously determined general norm nor by the judgment of a disinterested and therefore neutral third party.[348]

In Carl Schmitt's seminal work *The Concept of the Political*, this friend/enemy distinction in political decision-making and affiliations is crucial. Schmitt famously stated that every realm of human endeavours is structured by an irreducible duality. Morality rests on the dualism of good and evil, aesthetics reveal the antithesis between the beautiful and the ugly, and economics has a concern with the profitable and the unprofitable.[349] In politics, he argues that the core distinction is one between friend and enemy. This distinguishes politics from any other social realm. He states that the often quoted Biblical statement 'love your enemies' is perfectly appropriate for religion, but is incompatible with the life-or-death stakes that politics always involves as, for instance, in the thousand-year conflict between Christians and Muslims, the Christians never

[347] Andrew Norris, 'Carl Schmitt on Friends, Enemies and the Political', *Telos* 198.112 (Summer 1998), p. 68.
[348] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. by George Schwab (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 26-27.
[349] Schmitt, p. 26.

surrendered Europe out of love for the Saracens or the Turks.[350] Schmitt argues that, unlike moral philosophy, ethics and religion, the realm of the political is exempt from any objective to make the world just and fair for the multitude. It involves stakes of life and death: 'the political is the most intense and extreme antagonism'.[351] As a consequence, war is the most violent form that politics takes but, even without war, politics still requires that one's opponent be considered antagonistic to everything one believes in. It is not a personal antagonism, there is no hatred towards the opponent or desire for bloodshed. The rules of the political game simply demand that one should be prepared to vanquish the other if necessary. Salem's judicial-clerical political set-up obviously fits Schmitt's friend/enemy distinction in letter and spirit, as is evident from Governor Danforth's point of view quoted earlier.

In *The Concept of the Political,* Schmitt insists on the fundamental non-rationality of politics on account of the decision-makers' vulnerability to the fluid and flamboyant nature of events. This is why he defines the critical moments of politics as the time when the sovereign decision of identifying the enemy is taken. These critical moments relate to the state of exception in which the decisions taken by the sovereign power are singular, absolute and final. Schmitt emphasises enmity between political entities as a trigger of war and maintains that enmity in politics makes war a real possibility in which the existential negation of the enemy through his physical annihilation is always a possibility.[352] On the global political scene from recent history, liberal democracies rarely engage in wars with each other. The enmity between the cultural and ideological antagonists of liberal democracy, amongst them communism and fascism and other types of totalitarian political regimes, has nevertheless led to full-fledged wars. Schmitt's definition of the political arguably explains the political nature of these conflicts in which it is mandatory for each party to clearly define its friends and enemies and fight them. Schmitt claims that being guided by a friend-enemy distinction allows 'us' as a collectivity to be clear about what 'we' are and what is most rational for 'us' to do.[353]

It is in the public nature of the political categorisation of groups as 'our friends' and 'our enemies' that Schmitt sees an escape from the misinterpretation of the idea of universalism and the sweeping trust in

[350] Schmitt, p. 29.
[351] Schmitt, p. 29.
[352] Schmitt, p. 33.
[353] Schmitt, p. 35.

humanism. This is because all attempts to resolve political conflicts in the name of universal principles and humanity may unleash unprecedented acts of violence. The concept of humanity, for instance, is a useful ideological instrument for imperial expansionism and, when used in the form of ethical-humanitarian, it becomes a vehicle of economic imperialism.[354] Since wars in those circumstances may transcend the limits of political framework, Schmitt argues that opponents can degrade the enemy into moral and other categories and reduce it to the status of a monster that must not only be defeated but utterly destroyed.[355] Tracy B. Strong observes that the rational action in politics, steered and informed by the happening of events without a clear distinction between friend and enemy, can have two repercussions for Schmitt. The first is that one assumes that one shares universal qualities with others, which must then 'naturally' lead to an ultimate convergence of interests attainable through negotiation and compromise. In this scenario, the events are most likely not only to prove one wrong but also to destroy a group that acts on such a false belief. The examples Schmitt cites are those of the 'doomed' Russian classes and the aristocratic society of pre-revolution France. The second and more relevant repercussion in the contemporary world is that one claims to speak in the name of universal humanity. In that case, which is similar to the Salem theocracy, those one is opposed to must perforce be viewed as speaking and acting against humanity and deserve extermination through the use of force or legal sanctions.

Schmitt dwells on the relation of the concept of the enemy as a disturber or a destroyer with, as he calls it, the 'asymmetrical counter-concept' of humanity. He unravels the connotations of the term humanity as that which constitutes a single collectivity in ideal circumstances. As everyone belongs to humanity, there are no enemies of humanity as such. But it is the political difference within humanity that proves divisive and an enemy figure emerges, dehumanised to the extent of being declared an un-person and eligible to be destroyed. [356]As soon as discriminations take hold amongst humanity and one person or one social group starts hating another on account of differences between them, destroying the other can become justified, both rhetorically and through action, in the greater interest of humanity with the excuse of destroying the destroyer. This is why the concept of humanity is flexible enough to be misused in politics. Similarly, the Salem theocracy proceeded to persecute dissidents as social pariahs by

[354] Schmitt, p. 54.
[355] Schmitt, p. 36.
[356] Schmitt, p. 54.

considering them as pathogenic to community cohesion, thereby denying them the right to live. Thus they acted like a political entity, while subjecting certain people from their own society to the enemy status, in line with Schmitt's ideas about the dangers of the concept of humanity. This is why Schmitt finds potentially great inequalities in the concept of human being, as 'the human' is a highly asymmetrical term, which can be manipulated for repulsive ends. In this respect, Schmitt no longer calls the adversary an enemy, as Tracy B. Strong observes. He calls him a disturber of peace, thereby designating him as an outlaw of humanity. He wants to remove from politics, and especially from international politics or internal politics of an ideological kind, any possibility of justifying one's actions by invoking universal moral principles. He does so because he fears that otherwise any such claim will not accept any limitation of its scope.[357]

In terms of the relation of war in the friend/enemy distinction, Schmitt implies that war has its own strategic, tactical and other rules and points of view, but that they all presuppose that the political decision has already been made as to who the enemy is. Therefore, Clausewitz's familiar saying that 'war is politics continued with other means' is irrelevant in this context.[358] On the other hand, Schmitt declares:

> A world in which the possibility of war is utterly eliminated, a completely pacified globe, would be a world without the distinction of friend and enemy and hence a world without politics. It is conceivable that such a world might contain many very interesting antitheses and contrasts, competitions and intrigues of every kind, but there would not be a meaningful antithesis whereby men could be required to sacrifice life, authorized to shed blood, and kill other human beings. For the definition of the political, it is here even irrelevant whether such a world without politics is desirable as an ideal situation. The phenomenon of the political can be understood only in the context of the ever present possibility of the friend-and-enemy groupings, regardless of the aspects which this possibility implies for morality, aesthetics and economics.[359]

[357] Tracy B. Strong, 'Foreword: Dimensions of the New Debate around Carl Schmitt', in Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political,* trans. by George Schwab (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. xxii.
[358] Schmitt, p. 34.
[359] Schmitt, p. 35.

Schmitt then juxtaposes the non-political with the political and asserts that every religious, moral, economic, ethical or other antithesis can be used to be transformed into a political one if it is sufficiently strong to group human beings effectively into friend and enemy categories. The political does not reside in the battle itself, as Clausewitz claims. Battle possesses its own technical, psychological and military laws. The political resides in a mode of behaviour which clearly determines the concrete situation to distinguish between a real friend and a real enemy.[360] He illustrates this with an example of a religious community. If, for instance, this community wages war against members of other religious communities or engages in other wars, it is already more than a religious community, it is a political entity. It is a political entity when it possesses the capacity of promoting the decisive step of declaring its adversary as its enemy or when, in other circumstances, it restrains its members from indulging in a war. Hence the power to declare war or to settle for peace requires a political decision of a concrete definition of one's friend and enemy.[361] In this sense the conservative factions of theocracy in Salem behaved as a *political* entity by waging a legal offensive against all those who questioned conventional norms.

In relation to Hofstede's analysis, there is a parallel between the absolutes of good and evil, which in Hofstede's eyes are typically American, and the Schmittean absolutes of friend and enemy. Seen from the viewpoint of the 1950s, Miller's play can be seen as mirroring the Schmittean dichotomy proposed in the interbellum period that preceded it. Yet from this same viewpoint, it also *pre-dicts* the Schmittean revival that was manifest in the theories and politics of the neo-conservatives in the US in the last two decades. With *pre-dict* I mean to propose a counter-concept to preposterousness. In this case, my aim is not to argue that either Miller or the play was in some sense clairvoyant. They *pre-dicted* something in the sense that a script will *pre-dict*. This genre is designed to be 'filled in,' executed, performed, worked out. In a similar way, Miller's play is a *pre-diction* in the socio-cultural domain.

Pre-diction is not the only way in which the play relates to the future, however. There are two other ways of defining the play's relation with the future in the context of persistency in culture. One way is that the play participates in the future, or that it depicts a culture's persistency from the

[360] Schmitt, p. 37.
[361] Schmitt, p. 37.

vantage point of the future. The other way shows that it is chased by ghosts, or rather spectres, that speak both from the past and the future. This we will explore in our final two sections.

5.3 *The Crucible* as a Work of Art Operating Through Time: Depicting the Future

Although Miller's play concerns a tragedy that occurred in seventeenth-century Salem, it is also intended to be a critique of the repressive policies of Miller's contemporaries, as discussed in the previous chapter on McCarthyism in 1950s America. Amy D. Ronner explains that during this time of collective panic and hysteria, the US government hunted down innocent people, branded them disloyal, and denounced them as traitors. These people not only lost their friends and jobs, they became social outcasts. During that era, thousands of people were fired from positions in federal, state and local government as well as from private employment, including artists, university professors with leftist sympathies, fellow travellers and intellectuals.[362] Geoffrey R. Stone is right in correlating Salem with the 1950s anti-Communist prosecutions in the US when he says: 'like the Puritans in the Salem witch trials, the red hunters demanded public denunciation, purgation, humiliation and betrayal'.[363] Miller himself felt it: he was one of the blacklisted writers who wrote a play with explicit political parallels between Salem and the 1950s US.

Miller's historical play remains a work of art of its own times, on account of ongoing cultural patterns, such as prosecuting people on charges of 'guilt by association', and the US government's formulaic official response of 'producing fear' in Miller's present. And, with so many interpretations possible in our present, the play also embodies an historical paradigm that supports a recurring cultural pattern. This paradigm can be described as a recurrent, familiar culture of fear, which reappears at times of national political crises like the 1950s red hunts or the post-9/11 antiterrorism legislation, aimed at limiting and stifling the basic civil liberties that US democracy takes such pride in. The post-9/11 reality-shaping war rhetoric of president George W. Bush, in which he set apart certain regimes as the 'axis of evil,' also testifies to Carl Schmitt's theory of the concept of the political in which he emphasises the sovereign's power to define

[362] Amy D. Ronner, '*The Crucible*, Harvard's Secret Court, and Homophobic Witch Hunts', *Brooklyn Law Review* 73 (2007), pp. 217-18.
[363] Geoffrey R. Stone, 'Free Speech in the Age of McCarthy: A Cautionary Tale', *California Law Review* 93.5 (2005), p. 1400.

the enemy on the basis of the state of exception.[364] Thus this work of art echoes and resonates in the post-9/11 world, in which a politics of fear rules American democracy, and detention and torture at the behest of political oligarchs who are helped by modern surveillance technologies are outsourced.

This is what Kym Thorne and Alexander Kouzmin address as a synchronic legislative isomorphism in response to the incidents of 9/11 in the US.[365] US society had to forgo its cherished civil liberties in the aftermath of 9/11 when the state responded with legislative measures such as the USA PATRIOT Acts 2001 and 2006, the Homeland Security Act 2002, the Detainee Treatment Act 2005, and the Military Commissions Act 2006.[366] Frank Furedi sees the origin of these policy responses as a vulnerability that prevails in the technologically advanced democracies of the Western world at large. Their ultimate purpose is to reinforce resilience in these societies. However, as Furedi argues, paradoxically they also expose a powerful mood of insecurity in the face of uncertainty.[367] As Gabe Mythen and Sandra Walklate argue, the security threats' global character effectively democratises the distribution of risk everywhere. They remark that, as a consequence, the overall focus of Western capitalist societies has shifted from a positive impulse towards acquiring 'goods' such as income, health care, housing, to avoiding 'bad things' such as environmental despoliation, AIDS and terrorism. Hence the preferred option in all political conflicts has now also shifted from further possession of goods and resources to avoidance of risk.[368]

More in general, the concept of risk in modern times has ushered in an era of increased control, as Ulrich Beck observes:

> 'Risk' inherently contains the concept of control. Pre-modern dangers were attributed to nature, gods and demons. Risk is a modern concept. It presumes decision-making. As soon as we speak

[364] James Maggio, 'The Presidential Rhetoric of Terror: The (Re)creation of Reality Immediately after 9/11', *Politics & Policy* 35.4 (2007), p. 812.
[365] Kym Thorne and Alexander Kouzmin, 'The USA PATRIOT Acts (et al.): Convergent Legislation and Oligarchic Isomorphism in the "Politics of Fear" and State Crime (s) Against Democracy (SCADs)', *American Behavioral Scientist* 53.6 (2010), p. 885.
[366] Kym Thorne and Alexander Kouzmin, p. 887.
[367] Frank Furedi, 'Fear and Security: A Vulnerability-led Policy Response', *Social Policy & Administration* 42.6 (2008), pp. 645-46.
[368] Gabe Mythen and Sandra Walklate, 'Terrorism, Risk and International Security: The Perils of Asking "What if?"', *Security Dialogue* 39.2-3 (2008), p. 224.

> in terms of 'risk', we are talking about calculating the incalculable, colonizing the future.[369]

As Beck shows, the concept of risk is a modern one. In pre-modern societies such as Salem, dangers were attributed to the wilderness, the supernatural and natural calamities. However the network societies of the modern era are always on the move to calculate the 'risk', which is an incalculable concept. This requires pre-emptive decision-making and a prompt and synchronic response to the 'risk' the magnitude of which is unknown. This, in other ways, is an attempt to change the course of history by controlling and colonising the future.

This politics or fear, propaganda and antiterrorism hubris in a democracy is not similar to, but to a certain extent reminiscent of the repressive policies of Stalin in Russia or the politics of fear in the 1950s McCarthy era or, for that matter, in the US internment of Japanese citizens in the 1940s. David L. Altheide argues that a politics of fear rests on a discourse of fear and that this brand of politics mainly serves as a conceptual linkage of power, propaganda, news and popular culture, and intimidating symbols and experiences such as crime and terrorism. In order to prevent further victimisation of the social order, this newly defined and realised symbolic order invites protection policies and new interventions such as surveillance and arbitrary arrests during investigations.[370] News media and other public information sources nourish a discourse that contains elements of victimisation, of heroes and villains, unpredictability, vulnerability and melodrama, which sustain this policy of fear. Beck calls it an explosion of silence after the implosion of the Twin towers.[371] Peter Stearns observes that wretched calculators of real risk now perform American policy because they are so easily misled and manipulated by the media outlets and the politicians who profit from their anxieties.[372] In the context of the events of 9/11, the media images and the reporters' plotlines conveyed the first experience of the attacks to the viewers in America and the rest of the world. Elizabeth Anker argues that the media reinforced the victim image of the country as a morally powerful victim by creating a sense of

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[369] Ulrich Beck, 'The Terrorist Threat: World Risk Society Revisited', *Theory, Culture & Society* 19.4 (2002), p. 40.
[370] David L. Altheide, 'Terrorism and the Politics of Fear', *Cultural Studies↔ Critical Methodologies* 6.4 (2006), p. 423.
[371] Beck, 'The Terrorist Threat', p. 39.
[372] Peter N. Stearns, 'Fear and Contemporary History: a Review Essay', *Journal of Social History* 40.2 (2006), p. 479.

countrywide empathy to revive American national identity, ideals and moral virtues to transform victimisation into heroic retributive action.[373]

With respect to the above, Amy Ronner observes that Arthur Miller would in all likelihood not argue with the notion that the post-9/11 paranoia, along with the executive's passion for debilitating the American Constitution and augmenting state power to investigate, detain and interrogate, mirrors the Salem hysteria and McCarthy's project[374] However, as a theatre play, *The Crucible* wants to be more than just a bland comparison between three different historical periods marred by the same cultural anomaly. Miller asserts that there is a general potential threat of violence and loss of life when irrational terror leads to an official sanction of moral goodness. He elaborates: 'No man lives who has not got a panic button and when it is pressed by the clean white hand of moral duty, a certain murderous train is set in motion'.[375] In addition, because of this general characteristic of fear, the play has survived after the Cold War, in countries facing imminent coups but also in countries such as Britain where political hysteria such as McCarthy's has not infected society. Hence, as Jeffrey D. Mason argues, through his literary writing Miller exercised his right to advocate a contentious discursive battle in which writing would be an act of 'speaking out' for an engaged public scrutiny.[376]

In this respect, Miller poignantly suggests that *The Crucible* is a work of art with some sort of universal force, in the sense that it transcends time and space. This is particularly evident, as Robert Warshow observes, from the prevalence of witch hunts throughout history and from Miller's almost contemptuous lack of interest in proving the reality of the Salem episode in the simple plot of the play and also by his refusal to limit the play's subject to the timeliness of McCarthy era politics.[377] Miller expands on this point as follows:

> I was drawn to write *The Crucible* not merely as a response to McCarthyism. It is not any more an attempt to cure witch hunts than *Salesman* is a plea for the improvement of conditions for travelling men, *All My Sons* a plea for better inspection of airplane parts, or *A View from the Bridge* an attack upon the Immigration

[373] Elisabeth Anker, 'Villains, Victims and Heroes: Melodrama, Media, and September 11', *Journal of Communication* 55.1 (2005), pp. 22-23.
[374] Ronner, p. 220.
[375] Arthur Miller, 'It Could Happen Here ─ And Did', *The Theater Essays of Arthur Miller*, ed. by Robert A. Martin (New York: The Viking Press, 1978), p. 295.
[376] Jeffrey D Mason, 'Arthur Miller's Ironic Resurrection', *Theatre Journal* 55.4 (2003), p. 660.
[377] Warshow, p. 213.

> Bureau. *The Crucible* is, internally, *Salesman's* blood brother. It is examining the questions I was absorbed with before ─ the conflict between a man's raw deeds and his conception of himself; the question of whether conscience is in fact an organic part of the human being, and what happens when it is handed over not merely to the state or the mores of the time but to one's friend or wife.[378]

Miller's comments quite cogently reflect that the anti-Communist witch hunts were not the only stimulus behind the writing of this play, with an historical incident as its subject. Rather, as he explains, it would be highly reductive and parochial if this play was read and performed only in relation to its present, as an allegory of its times. As a work of art, the universal subject of this play involves its future application. The subject of public and private guilt was first unearthed from history and applied to its present, when the play was written, to be translated to the future by means of its predictive powers, through the performative force of the play, predictive in a culture that has produced recurrent spells of politically induced fear through times.

As Miller's quote highlights, *The Crucible* seeks to include a higher degree of consciousness than just being limited to the walled-in interpretations of a work of art as another political allegory of its times. Miller celebrates people's heightened awareness in his own times in the mid-twentieth century, compared to the generations before him when he says: 'We are aware as no generation was before of the larger units that help make us and destroy us. The city, the nation, the world, and now the universe are never far beyond our most intimate sense of life'.[379] Through his play Miller offers an implicit alternative to the paranoid politics in the shape of law and good faith, examples which he finds in the American Constitution and the Bill of Rights. These, he argues, 'de-symbolize the individual and consider him as the sum of his acts rather than his hidden thoughts and propensities for plotting evil'.[380] Still, according to Miller, we as a species also inevitably 'plot evil' and engage in witch hunts, for instance, that bring us pain, death and destruction. Yet in order to confront systematised panic in society, even when they thrive on a grain of fact, individuals have to wage a battle for truth by speaking up or confronting it through other means like art, as Miller himself did by writing this play.

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[378] Arthur Miller, 'Brewed in *The Crucible*', *The Theater Essays of Arthur Miller,* ed. by Robert A. Martin (New York: The Viking Press, 1978), pp. 172-73.
[379] Miller, 'Brewed in *The Crucible*', p. 173.
[380] Miller, 'It Could Happen Here', p. 299.

Proctor's outburst at the end of Act 3 refers to this impulse, when he addresses Danforth and Hale:

> A fire, a fire is burning! I hear the boot of Lucifer; I see his filthy face! And it is my face, and yours, Danforth! For them that quail to bring men out of ignorance, as I have quailed, and as you quail now when you know in all your black hearts that this be fraud ─ God damns our kind especially, and we will burn, we will burn together![381]

Proctor's vehement expostulation, although in the end not heeded by the inflexible Danforth in the play, is in tune with Miller's who advocates speaking the truth to power, especially when power is affixed to irrationality, when it is prone to disseminating prodigious fear and tempting mistrust of every individual in his or her fellow citizens.

That said, the question remains whether the play is 'universal' with regard to its future operation, or whether it is also specifically American. Miller's thesis may concern the ubiquitous nature of the witch hunts *generally* in suggesting that they can break out at any time and in any place. The malevolent forces that propel witch hunts can be considered to be omnipresent, as Miller seems to imply. His views on the metaphysical dualism of all times are evident from his comments on the play:

> Like Reverend Hale and the others on this stage, we conceive the Devil as a necessary part of a respectable view of cosmology. Ours is a divided empire in which certain ideas and emotions and actions are of God, and their opposites are of Lucifer. It is as impossible for most men to conceive of a morality without sin as of an earth without 'sky.' Since 1692, a great but superficial change has wiped out God's beard and the Devil's horns, but the world is still gripped between two diametrically opposed absolutes. The concept of unity, in which positive and negative are attributes of the same force, in which good and evil are relative, ever-changing, and always joined to the same phenomenon – such a concept is still

[381] Miller, *The Crucible,* p. 108.

> reserved to the physical sciences and to the few who have grasped the history of ideas.[382]

According to Miller, in contrast to the dispassionate approach followed in the physical sciences for the understanding of positive and negative aspects as relative and inalienable from each other in the whole of one cosmic force, the world and its political affairs are still defined by the absolutism of good and evil, and a quasi dualist perspective that is perilously synonymous with metaphysical worldviews.

In his analysis of the religiously charged rhetoric of American presidents such as Andrew Jackson (1829), Ronald Reagan (1984) and George W. Bush (2003) Paul Fletcher has analysed how all three explicitly echo Puritan moralism and America's providential mission for the sake of global justice and fulfilment of the divine will. This conscious mixing of piety with polity in US global liberal governance policies has a transcendental scope with a sacralised temporality and historicisation of eschatology.[383] Joshua Gunn also observes this diabolical rhetoric in American political culture with reference to the Red Scare when he states:

> Unlike the Catholic stress on the necessity of evidence of demonic invasion (the dialogic character), the exorcism common in US political discourse is more self-sealing, evangelical, and Protestant, stressing the unseen and silent character itself as evidence for mandating a war-like intervention.[384]

Thus, as Gunn states, a monster-creating spiritual warfare mission is embedded in the US political lexicon, in which good and evil are predefined to vilify and dehumanise the adversary. In this respect, Miller partakes in a culture as much as he analyses it. In other words, he reflects himself, implicitly, in the mirror of persistency of a specific culture. This persistency does not just relate to a past, it incorporates a future.

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[382] Miller, *The Crucible*, p. 32.
[383] Paul Fletcher, 'The Political Theology of the Empire to Come', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 17.1 (2004), pp. 49-51.
[384] Joshua Gunn, 'The Rhetoric of Exorcism: George W. Bush and the Return of Political Demonology', *Western Journal of Communication (includes Communication Reports)* 68.1 (2004), p. 10.

In the context of today's policies, Immanuel Kant's ideas of just and unjust enemies in the context of a future perpetual peace are relevant. To Kant, pre-emptive wars are illegitimate because they imply that, in a natural state, adversaries are bent on annihilating each other. However, his idea of an unjust enemy in a lawless culture is important for wars that are necessary to escape the violent state of nature and establish a legal order in society. Kant's ideas are fleshed out by Philip Crone, who reads Kant through Fabio Vander:

> An unjust enemy for Kant is one who resists going from 'the state of nature' to 'the juridical state'. At first sight even this is problematic, even redundant because 'the state of nature is itself an unjust state' and all subjects in it (including the friends and the enemies alike) are unjust. But the redundancy disappears when one considers that here Kant is dealing with another 'border situation' . . . because it is not a situation of two enemies in the 'state of nature' . . . but of one who tries to overcome this condition, while the other opposes the restoration of legality and politics.[385]

Fabio Vander is quoted here to support Crone's argument that the precise point of difference between Schmitt and Kant is that of the conceptualisation of a just and unjust enemy. Schmitt takes a radical stance on the definition of friend and enemy whereas Kant goes further and sees a war between the two factions as a war between a primitive state of nature and the progressive political forces that strive for ultimate peace and legal order. Schmitt, as Fabio Vander observes, wrongly understands Kant's concept of the unjust enemy as discriminatory because of the presupposition that one state is superior to the other. It is precisely because of this misunderstanding and the confusion around the concept of just and unjust enemy that Schmitt dismisses Kant's idea of limits in military action by proposing a homogenisation of all subjects, thus cancelling all differences.

However, in modern contexts the concept of a punitive, pre-emptive and exterminating war is increasingly considered as just on account of certain states which are seen as not complying with international law, the so-called 'rogue

[385] Philip Crone, 'Kant, Schmitt and Spinoza Confront the War on Terror', *Telos: Critical Theory of the Contemporary*, 13 October 2009. < http://www.telospress.com/kant-schmitt-and-spinozaconfront-the-war-on-terrorism/ > [accessed 6 January 2014]; Fabio Vander, 'Kant and Schmitt on Preemptive War', *Telos* 2002.125 (Fall 2002), pp. 152-66.

states.' Robert Bernasconi's argument in relation to Kant's idea of culmination of human history is relevant here when he says:

> The Kantian belief in peace as the culmination of human history does not so much search for points of agreement that might allow nations to live together; it is capable of inventing enemies where none previously existed. Hence, today, the United States of America sometimes considers as its enemies nations that are not seen as democratic or committed to free trade: they are judged to have refused the future in which peace will be secured. The United States can do so because it constitutes itself as at the vanguard of history. It is the representative of the future in the present; it is tomorrow today. By declaring itself the embodiment of the future, this one country claims for itself the right to exercise the jurisdiction of history: It, thus, claims the right to judge other peoples and governments by what they have done to promote or impair cosmopolitanism; the right to impose that judgment by force, if necessary; and the right to be free of the judgment of others because it alone represents this future. This may be a long way from what Kant intended when he declared future generations will judge peoples and governments according to what they have done to promote or to hinder the objectives of cosmopolitanism.[386]

Robert Bernasconi too finds in the political culture of the US adrift from Kant's liberal goals of perpetual peace because amongst Western nations there is an ubiquitous propensity to invent new enemies in their political interactions with nations that do not conform with their cherished liberal democratic goals (including peace). Certainly, in liberalism, which has hardly leaned towards pacifism throughout Western history, war is seen with suspicion for fear of its arbitrariness in terms of power and force. Yet the compulsion to go to war to establish perpetual peace in the spirit of Kant's liberal assumptions simultaneously becomes a reason for further violence. As Nicholas Rengger states, it 'is hardly surprising that the origins of liberal thinking in modern Europe are closely related to a rise in more general opposition both to war and,

[386] Robert Bernasconi, 'Perpetual Peace and the Invention of Total War', in *Philosophy and the Return of Violence: Studies from this Widening Gyre*, ed. by Nathan Eckstrand and Christopher Yates (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), pp. 48-49.

as a consequence, to those assumptions that appear to make war more likely',[387] Ulrich Beck defines the characteristics of post-national war in a similar way when he states:

> By contrast, what characterizes post-national war? The liquefaction and evaporation of the basic distinction that constitutes nation-state wars. In the place of 'either-or' appears 'both-and': both war and peace, both police and military, both crime and war, both civilian and soldier.[388]

Thus, in post-national warfare, the classical distinction prevalent in international law between war and peace, enemy and criminal, soldier and civilian has been blurred and an ambivalent style of warfare has taken its place in which peace and negotiations are interspersed with brutality and bloodshed.

In this context, the United States is imposing its democratic values unilaterally on states that wish to follow their own cultural and ideological modes of governance. And post-national warfare is her principal instrument. Kant's concept of perpetual peace and his idea of a universal history with cosmopolitan purpose were seen as inventive means for creating peace at all costs, including war. Yet if peace is defined as 'the good' or 'the just', then, here again, 'evil' needs to be destroyed, not so much with an eye on the present, but from the vantage point of the future. This brings me back to the absolutes defined by Miller as elements that are not so much universal as culture-specific and that may be embodied in ghosts, or rather spectres, that chase the subjects participating in a culture from both the past and the future.

5.4 The Persistency of Spectres: From the Past and the Future

The Crucible, in a paradoxical sense, can be considered as having contributed to the pool of fear that McCarthy and his affiliates created in the 1950s, by representing the seventeenth-century witch-craze. Through a reductive lens, the play may be viewed as somehow participating in the production of fear. Admittedly, for Miller the implicit and desired potential of the play lies in its power to open up history by revealing the trajectory of a culture. In *The*

[387] Nicholas Rengger, 'On the Just War Tradition in the Twenty-First Century', *International Affairs* 78.2 (2002), p. 357.
[388] Ulrich Beck, 'War is Peace: On Post-National War', *Security Dialogue* 36.1 (2005), p. 8.

Crucible, Miller elaborates on this cultural trajectory of diabolism in the US political space as follows:

> At this writing, only England has held back before the temptations of contemporary diabolism. In the countries of the Communist ideology, all resistance of any import is linked to the totally malign capitalist succubi, and in America any man who is not reactionary in his views is open to the charge of alliance with the Red hell. Political opposition, thereby, is given an inhuman overlay which then justifies the abrogation of all normally applied customs of civilized intercourse. A political policy is equated with moral right, and opposition to it with diabolical malevolence. Once such an equation is effectively made, society becomes a congerie of plots and counterplots, and the main role of government changes from that of the arbiter to that of the scourge of God.[389]

Thus, Miller considers that the rhetoric of demonology and exorcism in the American political arena is intentionally floated, not only to fulfil America's interests all over the world but also to control its population at home. Robert L. Ivie shares similar insights when he says that a trope of savagery, analogous to diabolism, though not unique to America, is certainly indigenous to the country. He argues that this discourse of savagery versus civilization in US war rhetoric has been used to quell dissent, to rally the nation along state policy and inoculate the public against alternative perspectives. For instance, during the 1812 war against Britain, the colonial rulers were framed as haughty pirates, beasts of prey, ruthless murderers and crazed tyrants. Likewise, in the 1846 expansionist war against Mexico, the campaign was portrayed by President Polk as a responsible act of national defence against an irresponsible Mexican aggressor and foe who was as unstable as a storm. During the late nineteenth-century imperial campaign in the Philippines, President McKinley justified the act to uplift, civilise and Christianise the locals who, as he proclaimed, were unable to govern themselves.[390] Thus this trope of savagery has literally and metaphorically worked in a culture to engender patriotism reflexively rather than thoughtfully.

[389] Miller, *The Crucible*, p. 33.
[390] Robert L. Ivie, 'Savagery in Democracy's Empire', *Third World Quarterly* 26.1 (2005), p. 56.

Democracy's political lexicon, in the US, contains religious under- and overtones of a dichotomous rhetoric of good and evil which is intermittently used to define its 'self' against the 'other' in an expanding empire, waging wars or doing interventions abroad. Language and rhetoric play a pivotal role, within a democracy. Dissent must also come from within this framework, and Ivie maintains that 'language is not ideologically neutral, but it is subject to rhetorical critique from within. Otherwise language rigidifies and devolves into violence, spawning self-sustaining rituals of vilification and victimization'.[391] The political antagonism in Soviet Russia and the United States made labelling their political opponents as simply either capitalist or 'red' ineffectual in their respective societies. The point was to frame them as being in alliance with the Devil. Both societies were finely divided between the entirely good or the entirely wicked during the Cold War era thanks to the power of the propaganda machinery at work in each country. In this context, Ivie explains the metaphorical equation of Soviet Russia as a savage 'other' in America's public consciousness as follows:

> Americans traditionally have exonerated themselves of any guilt for war, hot or cold, by decivilizing the image of their adversaries. This 'victimage ritual,' enacted with generic regularity, has sanctified the ideals of peace, freedom and democracy. It has legitimized total victory over a foe caricatured as irrational, coercive and aggressive, i.e., a foe who is totally uncivilized and therefore perfectly evil.[392]

This type of antagonism, which is derived from popular notions such as American exceptionalism and self-veneration, appear to haunt US political culture and this lies at the core of Miller's play as well. In terms of its artistic merit, but also of its political and ethical powers, there is much more to *The Crucible* than seventeenth-century hysteria or the 1950s ousting of Communists from government and the ranks of the American artistic and intellectual elite. It is primarily its predictive potential that makes the play in today's post-9/11 world as probing as it was in the 1950s. In the play, Miller transcends time and place, introducing us to the forces behind all irrational persecutions. As Ronner

[391] Ivie, 'Savagery in Democracy's Empire', p. 63.
[392] Robert L. Ivie, 'Metaphor and the Rhetorical Invention of Cold War "Idealists"', *Communications Monographs* 54.2 (1987), p. 178.

states, he not only depicts the warped psyches of those who pursue such campaigns of terror in historically specific circumstances, but also discloses the results of witch hunts: death, destroyed lives, blighted communities, illegitimate legal systems and deified lies shrouded in patriotic rhetoric and propaganda.[393] The play works through time in terms of haunting ghosts, as spectres that will not disappear.

My argument was inspired by the work of Graff Zivin, in a chapter called 'Allegory and Hauntology', in which she also deals with *The Crucible*. Her idea is as follows:

> The present chapter builds upon my argument in previous work that just as the historical conversion of Jews, which violently assimilated the Jewish other into the imperialism of the same, left *remainders* of Jewish difference, contemporary artistic works that seek to figuratively absorb the other of history into the present are similarly disrupted by an element of alterity that makes total incorporation impossible … This traumatic kernel that stands at the heart of the aesthetic work behaves as a specter in the sense discussed by Derrida, a spirit-become-flesh that is neither spirit nor flesh.[394]

In her dealing with *The Crucible*, as the odd one out in relation to South American works of art in particular, Graff Zivin defines the traumatic kernel, here, as a form of inquisition. The question, however, is whether this is truly the spectral point if, in the contemporary situation, forms of inquisition and torture are decisively *real*. In contrast, the spectre belongs to the metaphysical jargon, as Jacques Derrida defined it, when elaborating on the spectre of Marx in the post-Cold War age:

> The specter, as its name indicates, is the frequency of a certain visibility. But the visibility of the invisible. And visibility, by its essence, is not seen, which is why it remains *epekiena tes ousias*, beyond the phenomenon or beyond being. The specter is also, among other things, what one imagines, what one thinks, one sees and which one projects – on an imaginary screen where there is

[393] Ronner, p. 221.
[394] Graff Zivin, p. 59.

> nothing to see. Not even the screen sometimes, and a screen always has, at bottom, in the bottom or background that it is, a structure of disappearing apparition. But now, one can no longer get any shut-eye, being so intent to watch out for the return […] the specter first of all sees us. From the other side of the eye, *visor effect*, it looks at us even before we see it or even before we see period. We feel ourselves observed, sometimes under surveillance by it even before any apparition. Especially – and this is the event, for the specter is of the event — it sees us during a visit. It (re) pays us a visit […] The latter does not always mark the moment of a generous apparition or a friendly vision; it can signify strict inspection or violent search, consequent persecution, implacable *concatenation.* The social mode of haunting, its original style could also be called, taking into account this repetition, *frequentation*.[395]

Derrida, in the first part of this quote, indicates that the word 'specter' belongs to the world of charm and incantation and its meaning corresponds to the recurrence of a certain phenomenon which is not corporeal. Yet its visibility is acknowledged despite the fact that it does not exist in physical form. It can be an illusion, a product of one's mind, an imaginary idea which is projected in the realm of the real world. This can be a hallucination, including the unknown apparitions and ghostly images which one's mind can craft. One can convince, for instance, the crowds with one's fervent rhetoric and intent only for a spectre to reappear as a result of which an entire society can be obsessed or haunted by its fear. This is precisely how Salem's 'possessed' girls invoked spirits, witches and diabolism in 1692, and also how Joseph McCarthy ventured to demonise the communists in the US in the 1950s.

Derrida's argument, however, does more than allowing us to analyse things from the past. In a basic sense, the spectre is a force from the vantage point of the future in that it looks at us first, before we see it. Here, Derrida speaks of the spectre's origin and birth when he says that it belongs to the 'event,' and it first of all sees us in a concrete form. This means that there is an untoward prior event associated with the spectre that accounts for its feared recurrence and reception during its reappearance in different guises and this reappearance is something of the future. The spectre looks at us in the course of

[395] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (New York, London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 125-26.

a visit. Later it repays us a visit, which is the process of social haunting due to apparitions of the event that may infest memory with a trauma effect. It is the most disagreeable scenario, which brings in its wake persecution, violence and, as in case of the contemporary scenario, rendition and just wars. Derrida calls this repetitive social haunting by the spectre of the event frequentation. We are being frequented, with a certain frequency, i.e. repetition. In the very word 'frequented' past and future are operative as well.

When Derrida states that the spectre appears to manifest itself in a visitation, it is not present in a concrete and tangible form but becomes known through its representation by those who are haunted by it. Derrida thus speaks of the spectre's non-presence and demands that its time and history be taken into consideration. He calls it the singularity of its temporality or of its historicity.[396] In the case of the spectre of fear, the production and reproduction of fear in different historical periods of the United States' social history, it is necessary for these specific political events and cultural circumstances be known first, which in turn resurrect this spectre to haunt the people in almost isomorphic patterns. Derrida quotes from *The Eighteenth Brumaire*:

> Men make their own history but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.[397]

In one sense, Derrida states that the ghost of tradition and of the past always lurks among the new generations. In the case of US history, US society prides itself on, and the country has enormously benefitted from, its democratic tradition and the sacrifices of its founding fathers. But equally the ghosts of its past have persistently frequented its society, as they belong to their collective memory. As such, however, in their frequenting they embody the future. The 'evil' of Salem, for instance, has burdened the following generations through its phantom-like reappearance in the 1950s and also in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Of course, the spectres as such do not exist independently, they have to be made, time and again, especially in moments of crisis, as Derrida writes:

[396] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 126.
[397] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 134.

> And just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle-cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language.[398]

Derrida illustrates the phenomenon of conjuring up the spirits from the past when there is an impulse for change and transformation on a revolutionary scale. The spirits of evil were a convenient source, for instance, to equate with the red menace in the United States during the early years of the Cold War and to fight communism globally. This is why, as Derrida rightly points out, familiar tactics were applied in confronting the enemy. The post-9/11 scenario, likewise, promises to make history by arousing the same old spectres, ghosts and spirits. There is an emphasis on the positive conjuring up of the past but, Derrida adds, it is not clear whether the ghost or the spirit from the past will only be making a friendly visit. There is always a likelihood that this conjuring up is only seemingly welcoming and hospitable, since it arouses the dead, makes or lets them come alive, and is never free from anxiety and trauma. Therefore, as Derrida maintains, it automatically becomes a moment of repulsion but also of restriction.[399]

The Crucible clearly plays with the frequent recurrence of ghosts, and projects a spectre-like power itself, as if it were lying in wait for the moment to frequent its audience. Yet this is not all that can be said about the play's role with regard to cultural persistency. I would like to bring my argument to an end by moving to my conclusion in which I will examine whether there is more than a culture's future persistency, or whether there is space for renewal in the future. For this I will return to my initial question: Why did Miller choose a *play* to respond to the politics of McCarthyism in the 1950s. I will expand this question into: Why does Miller's text, as a play, still work, and why will it still be *working*?

[398] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 135.
[399] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 135.