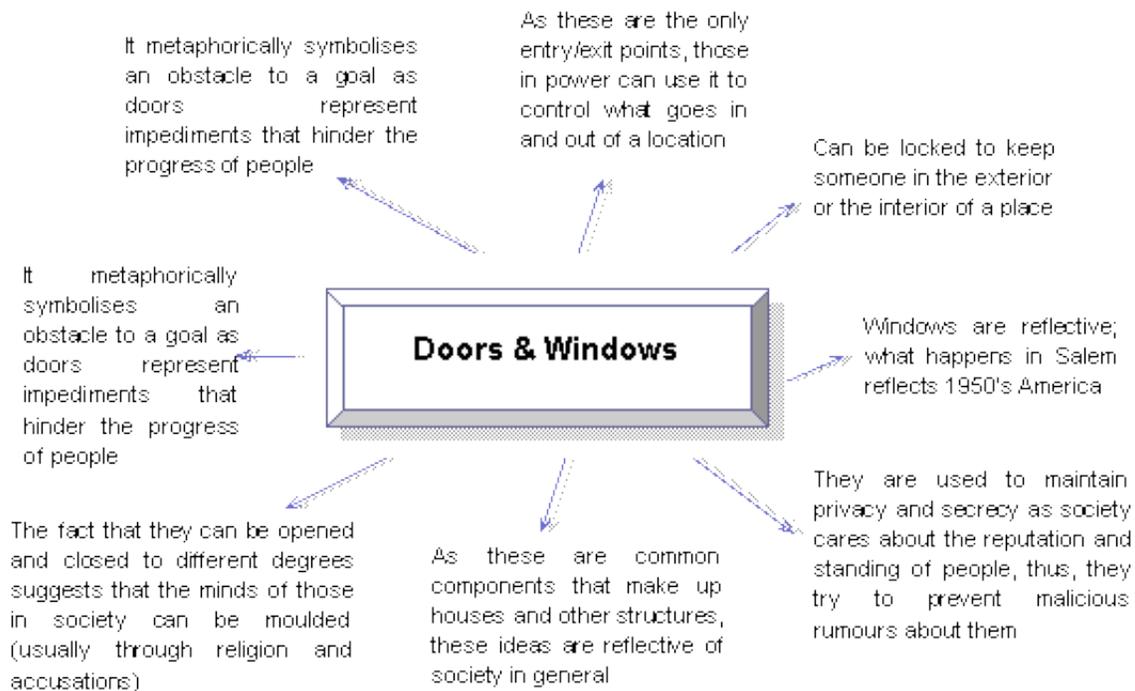


## Motif Tracking: The Crucible – Doors & Windows



### Summary:

Arthur Miller uses the motif of doors and windows as a symbol of entrapment and restriction. Closed doors and windows could suggest that characters are confined thus suggesting their lack of freedom. Moreover, windows and doors could also be used as a representation of freedom and hope. Open doors and open windows could suggest a way out, thus implying that there is a way of escape for the character, however most of the windows and doors in Salem are closed and the majority of the play takes place inside which further reinforces the limited degree of freedom that the citizens of Salem have. Light shining through windows could suggest that there is hope, however on the other hand windows being too high, or small could also create the sense of restriction and entrapment. Thus Miller uses the motif of windows and doors throughout the play to represent the restrictive nature of the Salem.

### Quotations:

Page	Quotation	Analysis
13	STAGE DIRECTIONS "...narrow window at the left..."	This narrow nature of this window, introduced before any action in the play begins, shows how that this society has a sense of restriction surrounding it. Nonetheless, the very fact that there is a window mentioned at all and that the morning rays are shining through also suggest that there will be an element of hope for some characters. But, the hope will be "narrow".
18	PARRIS [scrambling to his feet in a fury]: Out of my sight! [She is gone.] Out of my – [He is overcome with sobs. He clamps his teeth against them and closes the door and leans against it, exhausted.] Oh. My God! God help me! [Quaking with fear, mumbling to himself through his sobs, he goes to the bed and gently takes BETTY's hand.]	The fact that Parris closes and then leans against the door symbolizes how desperate he is to hide the 'truth' of his daughter's condition from the other members of Salem. It is this secrecy and Parris' knowledge that certain members of the society will use any scent of scandal to crush him that acts as a foundation for the lies and hysteria that fuel the witch hunts and eventually result in the hangings of innocent people. Parris' fear reflects the fear that many ordinary Americans feel in the 1950s in the face of the Communist witch hunts.

	Betty. Child. Dear child. Will you wake, will you open up your eyes! Betty, little one...	Moreover, the closing of the door reveals to the audience how narrow-minded society's views are as Parris is the religious leader of this theocratic society.
25	PARRIS [to ABIGAIL]: If she starts for the window, cry for me at once.	<p>Parris is the person who suggests the idea of leaping out the window and this foreshadows what will happen later in Act 1. Moreover, it is Parris who first believes that she will do these things, thus, it reveals his predisposition to believe in the idea of witches and also the way in which it is the beliefs of people like Parris and Hale that actually inspire the stories that the girls produce, thus reflecting how in the 1950s official policy (e.g. the fear of Communism) may have prompted hysterical / delusional behaviour from the ordinary American people.</p> <p>On the other hand, this could also perhaps foreshadow that some characters will make a bolt or leap for freedom, but will ultimately fail, as society will pull them back in.</p>
26	BETTY: I'll fly to Mama. Let me fly! [She raises her arms as though to fly, and streaks for the window, gets one leg out.]	<p>Betty is trying to convince Parris that she is being controlled by a supernatural force. Parris does not realize that she is simply acting and this undermines Parris and his actions in the eyes of the audience.</p> <p>Furthermore, as stated tentatively in the previous quotation analysis, it could have reflections of making a dash for freedom and failing.</p>
29	ABIGAIL: "...yours has drawn me to my window...Dou you tell me you've never looked up at my window?"	<p>Here Abigail's passionate desire for Proctor is apparent: the association of both of these characters with a window may represent how they are both rebels against the rules of their time. It perhaps also suggests Abigail's powerful nature, thirst for freedom and continual pushing of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour for a Salemite.</p> <p>Proctor lurking outside of her window reflects not only the desperate nature of his passion, something which he is himself ashamed of, but also the fact that he is truly an outsider in this society.</p>
41	PARRIS [quickly]: Will you look at my daughter, sir? [Leads HALE to the bed.] She has tried to leap out the window; we discovered her this morning on the highroad, waving her arms as though she'd fly.	Parris is clearly concerned by what is happening to his daughter. Moreover, from a feminist perspective, it is possible to interpret Betty's actions as a desperate attempt to break free from the patriarchal society that is limiting the freedom of women and their ability to take part in basic activities such as dancing.
46	ABIGAIL: Sometimes I wake and find myself standing in the open doorway and not a stitch on my body! I always hear her laughing in my sleep. I hear her singing her Barbados songs and tempting me with –	Abigail is taking advantage of the situation because she saw how Tituba was able to transform her damnation into a form of influence and she wants similar power and attention. From a feminist perspective, this can be seen as her desperate attempt to gain attention from those who would otherwise dismiss her opinions.
52	PROCTOR: It's winter in here yet. On Sunday let you come with me,	This quotation in a calm tone implies that Proctor does care and love his wife, Elizabeth. "With good feeling he

	and we'll walk the farm together; I never seen such a load of flowers on earth. [With good feeling he goes and looks up at the sky through the open doorway]	goes and looks up at the sky through the doorway” which suggests that there is a sense of hope as the doorway is open. Additionally, because both characters are looking outside but are both within the house there is a feeling of entrapment and longing for freedom as Proctor is imagining all the things he could do with his wife. Moreover, by wanting to walk out the “open doorway”, it suggests Proctor’s independence and how he is willing to go against the rules of Salem if he believes his own morals are superior; he believes his path will lead to enlightenment (which may be why he “looks up at the sky). Moreover the doorway suggests that not only is he willing to break the rules of society, he does not mind taking the risk to find a sense of individual freedom.
57	MARY WARREN: So many time, Mr. Proctor, she come to this very door, beggin' bread and a cup of cider-and mark this: whenever I turned her away empty, she mumbled	“She come to this very door” the door could be a representation of the difference between those who are deemed respectable in Salem society. The beggar here is Sarah Good and her status as an outcast in Salem is emphasised by her position relative to Mary – she is outside while Mary is inside. Mary later goes on to describe how she accused Sarah Good of witch craft in court and this effectively depicts how those who are ‘acceptable’ members of society, those who are ‘in’ are able to use the courts to attack those who are ‘out’. The parallel to 1950s America where the Communists are clearly the outsiders is apparent and Mary’s unfounded accusations reflect the baseless nature of McCarthy’s witch hunt.
61	[Quite suddenly, as though from the air, a figure appears in the doorway. They start slightly. It is Mr. Hale. He is different now-drawn a little, and there is a quality of deference, even of guilt, about his manner now.]	The door could signify uncertainty, as a “figure” appears from the doorway. Once we realize that it is Hale we see the he is different, before he came through the door with confidence as well as arrogance. However, now he comes through the door with a quality of deference and guilt. Thus the door could reflect the turning point of Hale’s character.
73	PROCTOR: [He rushes out the door]	As the door is used to represent a kind of freedom, Proctor’s dash towards it represents how he is becoming increasingly independent and increasing certain that he must challenge the power of the court and attempt to liberate the rest of Salem.
75	PROCTOR: Make your peace with it! Now Hell and Heaven grapple on our backs, and all our old pretence is ripped away - make your peace! [He throws her to the floor, where she sobs, 'I cannot, I cannot ...' and now, half to himself, staring, and turning to the open door]	Proctor is commanding Mary Warren to confess in the hope of saving his wife, his position near the open door suggests again Proctor’s independence, his individuality and the fact that he has now reached a point where he is not afraid to be an outsider as the fact that the door is open creates a sense of freedom and lack of restraint. Additionally, he may be looking for a way out of the sin he has committed and his position on a threshold suggests that he is struggling with something. As we find out later he is struggling with his own judgement of himself as it will take him until the end of the play to forgive himself for his affair with Abigail and, as he says, be able to see some good in John Proctor.

76	[As the curtain rises, the room is empty, but for sunlight pouring through two high windows in the back wall. The room is solemn, even forbidding. Heavy beams jut out, boards of random widths make up the walls. At the right are two doors leading into the meeting house proper, where the court is being held. At the left another door leads outside]	The fact that the sunlight is pouring through the windows suggests that there is a sense of hope. However, the two windows are high thus, suggesting that this hope is still distant, and thus that while John is free and 'has his goodness now' everyone else is still at the mercy of the absurd court and the hysterical accusations which are plaguing the town. This reflects how, although there may be a few who have realised how absurd the McCarthy witch hunt is, there is still no way out of this for the masses.
91	DANFORTH: Mr. Parris, I bid you be silent! [He stands in silence, looking out the window. Now, having established that he will set the gait]	This quotation could imply that even Danforth, a person who represents authority, law and rules looks out the window in search of hope, freedom and answers. This is also an indication to show that everyone within Salem is restricted in some sense. In Danforth's case he is prevented from seeing the truth by his world view which dictates that witches (Communists in the parallel with 1950s America) are a real threat and thus that the hysterical claims of the girls are reliable.
108	[A cell in Salem jail, that falls. As the back is a high barred window; near it, a great heavy door.]	"High barred Window" and "A great heavy door" clearly suggests restriction and entrapment as the windows which are supposed to let in sunlight have been barred. Additionally, the door, which people use constantly to get in and out, is heavy which emphasizes the constraint within the cell in Salem's jail and within Salem as a whole. This sense of despair could represent Miller's fear that he sees no way out of the madness and hysteria sweeping America, resulting in the prosecution of innocent people for supposed Communist ties.
121	DANFORTH: Why for the good instruction Mister; This we shall post upon the church door [To Parris urgently] Where is the marshal?	This quotation clearly reveals how Danforth believes that a confession from a person such as Proctor is required to prove to society that their actions have been right; Proctor's eventual refusal leaves them vulnerable to be overthrown in a rebellion like the one in Andover. The urgency of the action also clearly implies that Danforth wants to collect the written confession before Proctor changes his mind.

**Key Moment:**

The key moment of this motif is most definitely the scene where Danforth insists that Proctor's written confession is required so that it can be "post upon the church door". This clearly signifies how Danforth believes that Proctor's written confession can be proof to the rest of society that the actions taken by Danforth were appropriate to handle the situation and this would spare him from being overthrown in a rebellion like the one in Andover. The fact that this confession is to be pinned on the door of the Church emphasises how it is the Church and its doctrines that control society in Salem, the 'proud' posting of Proctor's confession, which is actually a lie, on the church door emphasises the irony of the situation where those who lie are praised as holy while those who tell the truth are condemned to death. Miller wants to point out a similar absurd irony that exists in his own time, only in 1950s America the authority structure that he criticises is no longer the church and its belief in God and the Devil but the government and its equally misguided belief in Capitalism and the evils of Communism.

Moreover, the urgency with which Danforth and Parris wanted the written confession reveals how they wanted to get the

document from Proctor before he changed his mind. In the eyes of the audience, this clearly undermines their characters and the theocratic society in which they live and by doing this, Miller wants to undermine what is happening in 1950's America as well as he believed that the Communist witch hunt was simply used as a cover to allow people to take revenge against those people did not like. This key moment is particularly important as it justifies the actions of Proctor. Proctor believes that by giving them a written confession which would be put up on the "church door", he will ruin his "name". His refusal to give the written confession is what makes him believe that he is in fact good enough to die because he is unable to go through the final step which would make him lie. So, ironically, the fact that Danforth says this in order to give salvation to Proctor by making him lie, which would in fact have made him a sinner, Danforth has accidentally given salvation to Proctor because he has made Proctor realise that he is good enough to die the same death as others in society such as Giles Corey. There is also a parallel between Proctor and Miller here as Miller believes that he was in a similar position during the Communist witch hunt. Thus, by portraying Proctor as a hero, he wishes to reveal that he considers himself a hero as well.