Your Name

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Is it Real?

Mass Hysteria is when a large group or community of people is extremely overwhelmed by fear and anxiety and resultantly, they ignore any kind of logic and rationale. Members of the group start to feed off the terror and fright of other members of the group and it soon develops into hysteria. In The Crucible, the theme of hysteria is prevalent throughout the plot and the actions of all the characters support the thesis that hysteria plays a chief role in tearing apart a society or a community and completely displaces logic (Miller). The characters completely turn against their neighbors, whom they have known for years and start to accuse them on account of worshipping the devil and practicing witchcraft. The community, as a whole, begins to have a staunch belief in the legitimacy of the origins of fear.

There were a lot of different ways in which hysteria was manifested during various points in the novel, but the primary act of hysteria was that it fully wrecked the community and people of Salem.

The plot follows the deceit of a small group of young girls and the effects this lack of honesty had on the simple lives of the Puritan people of Salem. Many innocent people were accused of witchcraft and were involved in trials, which had horrible consequences. The novel is a true depiction of the fact how greed, dishonesty, superstition and mass hysteria can claim the lives of many people and trigger a grave lack of trust among the members of a community.

Mass hysteria serves as a blessing in disguise for a few people in the community because it allows them to rigorously act on their darkest desires and deep-rooted hatred for some people, all under the face-saving protection of religion.

Set in a theocratic town, which entails the church and state acting as one entity, the code of ethics and the state laws are the same for everyone. The public fully considers all the private actions and matters of an individual's life with concern and there is no stretch of imagination which regards the public and private matters as separate.

In the plot, all and sundry is the possession of either God or the devil and this is the underlying cause of the Salem trials. Due to the absence of any possibility for any kind of divergence from the established norms, many innocent lives were accused of wrongdoings and ultimately were sentenced to death.

Mass hysteria can be considered as a critical theme of the plot which led people to believe that members of their community are responsible for committing preposterous crimes that are against the code of conduct in a theocratic society. This widely spread, egregious emotion was accepted by everyone in the town within days and made them ignore reason regarding justice and sacrifice, for their neighbors. Such reactions did not stem from the religious piety of the townsfolk. Instead, long-suppressed feelings of vengeance and hatred steered these misdeeds.

Even the most moral people in the society who are known for their high standards of piety and reverence, thrive on the negative effects of hysteria. In the plot, the reverend of the town strengthens his position while feeding the fear of God to the people of the community and in the wake of events, becomes responsible for making a very innocent man, a victim of his authority.

The plot is a true portrayal of the fact that mass hysteria grows vigorously because people in a community reap benefits out of it. Under the false cover of religious fervor, people can act in the most terrible ways at the expense of innocent lives to feed their hatred and darkest desires.

# **Works Cited**

Miller, Arthur. *The crucible*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015.