

Gert Krell: „Witches and Other Scapegoats”

Preview Lecture for the DramaClub Production of the historical play

“The Crucible” by Arthur Miller

at the English Theatre Frankfurt

August 11, 2012, 18:00

(long version, complete with footnotes and references)

Dr. Gert Krell, Professor Emeritus of International Relations at the Social Science Faculty of the Goethe-University in Frankfurt/Main

Home address: Im Langgewann 37, 65719 Hofheim

Homepage: www.gert-krell.de

1. Introduction: Political Dimensions in “The Crucible”¹

It does not need a political scientist to state that Arthur Miller’s famous play *The Crucible* of 1953 has obvious political dimensions. The specific situation in the drama is a life and death fight over the norms and rules of a community; is the question of the adequacy of rules for the common good or rather their perversion, are doubts about and opposition to and resistance against this perversion. We become witnesses to the social construction – through hysteria, calculation, and the abuse of power – of a division between “the good” (i.e. the supposedly God and law abiding) and the “evil” (those supposedly in connection with the devil and those accused of and denying it), based on pure fiction, and the exclusion of 19 people of the “evil” section from the community through imprisonment and murder, thinly disguised as legal.

Another major question in political theory and practice, which the play addresses, is the division between public and private: public issues which concern, are discussed, and decided by the whole community or its representatives in institutions, and private issues which are the prerogative of the individual or the family. Where to draw the dividing line, is in itself a public and thus a political and of course a historical question. In the community in which the drama *The Crucible* unfolds, religious beliefs and religious practice and the norms which these entail are public questions with very little leeway for individual variation. It used to be like that in much of European history and still is in several, mostly in Islamic countries today.

Of course, *The Crucible* is not only a drama about a historical community. Parallels between the play and the political climate in the United States in the early 1950s are obvious and were clearly on Arthur Miller’s mind. This was the time of the “Second Red Scare”, with fear or rather paranoia about Communist subversion and with aggressive investigations and prosecutions by Senator Joseph McCarthy, by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, or by the FBI under its Director J. Edgar Hoover. If the religious terminology of the play were to be translated into secular language, most people would probably agree that it is a drama about “the practice of making accusations of disloyalty, subversion, or treason without proper regard for evidence”, the definition given by the Wikipedia dictionary for McCarthyism.²

During the McCarthy era, thousands of Americans were accused of being Communists or Communist sympathizers. The primary targets of government or private-industry panels, committees and agencies were government employees, people in the entertainment industry, tea-

¹ The actual lecture was an abbreviated version of this paper. I have added a few thoughts after the preview.

² Wikipedia, *McCarthyism*, p. 1 of 19.

chers and union activists. Suspicions were often given credence despite inconclusive or questionable evidence, and the level of threat posed by a person's real or supposed leftist associations of beliefs was often greatly exaggerated. Many people suffered loss of employment or destruction of their careers; some even suffered imprisonment. Most of the punishments came about through trial verdicts later overturned, laws that would be declared unconstitutional, dismissals for reasons later declared illegal or extra-legal procedures that would come into general disrepute.³ (Watching and listening to actor James Morgan as Governor Danforth, the presiding judge of the Salem witch trials in the session of the General Court in Act III, sent the shivers down my spine; shivers about the perfidy and deviousness of totalitarian juridical investigation, where no defendant will ever have a chance.)

As late as 1956, Arthur Miller himself had been summoned before the House Committee on Un-American Activities and asked to name friends who may have been Communists, which he declined to do – a parallel to the behavior of his protagonist John Proctor in *The Crucible*. There is also an essential difference between the witch hunts of the 17th century and the McCarthy era: As far as I know, in the 1950s nobody was sentenced to death or let rot to death in prison because of alleged or actual Communist leanings. Arthur Miller did not have to go to jail for his refusal to name names. Still, I am sure he would be deeply concerned about the current political situation in the United States, were he still alive. Contemporary writer Paul Auster sees his country as ferociously divided as during the Civil War, and he calls the Republican right “American Dschihadists”.⁴

Well, *The Crucible* is *not only* about politics and certainly not only about the United States. It is also a play about serious ethical questions and decisions; about conformity and opportunism on the one hand, solidarity and moral courage, the sacrifice of one's life for decency and honesty on the other; about genuine sin, power plays, blind revenge, narrow material interests; but also about forgiveness and marital and personal development. And it is a play about the collective process of constructing scapegoats, the practice of singling out individuals or groups for unmerited negative treatment by pushing the blame onto them for mistakes, failures, or conflict potential regardless of evidence.⁵ Instances of collective hysterical scapegoating can be found in the news almost anytime. Take the “witch-hunt” in Emden in March this year, where some 50 people gathered around a police station to demand the release of a young

³ Almost verbatim according to Wikipedia, *McCarthyism*, p. 1 of 19.

⁴ *Dies ist ein geteiltes Land*, Interview with Paul Auster in DIE ZEIT, July 19, 2012, p. 43.

⁵ The definition given in Wikipedia, *Scapegoating*, p. 1 of 4.

man arrested in connection with the murder of an 11-year-old girl. A young man of 17 had put the following note on the net: “Aufstand! Alles zu den Bullen. Das stürmen wir. Lasst uns das Schwein tothauen. (Rebellion! Everybody to the cops. We will run them over. Let us beat that pig to death.)” It turned out later that the police had caught the wrong person, who was innocent. Some reports in the press focused on this point, whereas in fact the activities of the “witch-hunters” would have been just as intolerable had they gone after the right man. When asked what had taken him into his lynching-mob attitude, the 17-year-old said he really did not know. The whole city had been so disturbed and emotional when the news about the awful murder of the little girl had gone around. Everybody had talked about the crime. And then he had seen on the net that a young man had been arrested.⁶

In my presentation, I will discuss three major examples connected with scapegoating; examples which I have dealt with in writing and in lectures recently in Germany: (1) the present trend of rehabilitating witches and the discussion of gender relations in witch-hunting, (2) Günter Grass’ poem about the conflict between Israel and Iran and anti-Semitism, and (3) Thilo Sarrazin’s book about Germany’s decline and prejudice against Muslim immigrants. These case studies can be used as substantial illustrations of the topicality of Arthur Miller’s play and the phenomenon of scapegoating.

2. Witch Hunting and Gender Relations

The persecution, prosecution, and murder of so-called witches and conjurers still occur today in many countries and cultures, mainly in Africa but also in other areas of the developing world; in Europe and North America they came to an end in the course of the 18th century. Here, as a late consequence of women’s emancipation and feminist discourses, a process of political rehabilitation has begun within the last 20 years. In Germany, Winterberg in the Sauerland was the first town, in 1993, to rehabilitate the victims of its historical witch trials. Idstein followed in 1996, Eschwege in 2007, Bad Homburg in 2012. Of the major cities, Duesseldorf rehabilitated its witches in 2011 and Cologne in 2012. The city of Bamberg, which had seen three particularly brutal waves of persecution between 1595 and 1631 with more than 880 people accused of magic or witchcraft, has started a public discussion of witch hunting in Franconia. In the United States, the Governness of Massachusetts signed a declaration of innocence for the last five of the female victims at Salem on October 31, 2001. At Hofheim, my home town, women’s groups have been active researching the prosecution and

⁶ See Frankfurter Rundschau, May 31st, 2012, p. 37.

burning at the stake of 11 women by the Hoechst/Hofheim district court around the turn of the 16th to the 17th century. At that time, Hofheim belonged to the Electoral Bishopric of Mogontia (Kurmainz), which had been responsible for about 1500 victims, altogether, mainly in the hundred years between 1550 and 1650. In December 2010, the communal parliament of the city of Hofheim rehabilitated its 11 “witches” and declared them innocent.⁷

A number of people, mostly women, publicly commemorate the victimization of the “witches” from Hofheim and celebrate their rehabilitation every year by naming and honoring them at the so-called “Hexenturm” (the witches’ tower). In April this year, they invited me to give a lecture about current gender issues from a peace research point of view. The topic I chose was “Gender Relations between Violence and Peace.”⁸ I made two points which may be relevant for our discussion here. In general, men are much more violent than women; probably not so much through biology but through socialization, social convention, and the division of labor. That may at the same time be the major reason why they are also, in general, more often victims of violence than women. As for violence between the sexes, there is another broad asymmetry: men are much more often violent towards women than the other way round. The beating of women by men, in fact the beating of wives by their husbands, is the most common type of family violence across cultures and historical periods. Acts of sexual violence are practically exclusively committed by men, not only but mostly against women.

Another important issue in the relationship between gender and peace or war is male ambivalence about females. Men desire women but they are also often afraid of them. Particularly in prudish cultures such as the Puritan community in the play, they are afraid to admit to their own sensuality which they project onto the other sex, accusing women of seducing or bewitching them. A third aspect is the uncertainty of many men about their own maleness. Fear of not being a real man or a “sissy” can be a factor in decisions about war and peace. There is ample evidence for that in German, but also in US history, e.g. Fear of inner “feminine” dimensions and the corresponding projections in discounting strategies of “feminine” fields of politics such as environmental protection or welfare subsidies (the “nanny state”) and an over-identification with “male” aspects of government such as a strong military or unilateralism are important factors in American politics; but not only there. As Paul French has argued recently

⁷ For the data, see Wikipedia, *Hexenverfolgung*, p. 7 of 11 and the speech given by Dr. Erika Haindl at the commemoration at Hofheim, April 27, 2012.

⁸ The paper “Geschlechterverhältnisse zwischen Gewalt und Frieden” is on my website in the papers section. It is based on the chapter „Feminism“ in Krell 2009.

in *Foreign Policy*, women have been consistently demonized in Chinese history, and even Mao never eradicated China's deep-seated misogyny: "A successful man achieves power, wealth, and the love of many before being brought low by an excessive ambition encouraged by his wife, a beautiful woman obsessed with money and power." Yet demonizing "dragon ladies" seems only a sideshow to deflect from the "real action". History is written by the victors, and in China's case that was a group of buttoned-up old men both scornful to and deathly afraid of their women.⁹

These general remarks about male violence and femiphobia may help to explain why the great majority of victims of the witch hunts, between 75 and 80 percent, were women. The gender relations in the historical witch hunts and in the play add a number of important qualifications, however. First of all, not all of the victims were females; in several northern European countries the majority were men. In the play, two of the victims are men. And the accusers and persecutors are males *and* females. In the historical witch hunts, most of the denunciations of witchcraft came from women. In the play, the process of scapegoating is set in motion by the community's reverend, reluctantly at first and under cross-cutting advice. It is taken up by the reverend's female slave and a group of young ladies, who – after some hesitation and under pressure – accuse other women in order to deflect criticism of their behavior. It is reinforced by males in strong social positions and also by grown-up and established females. The first targets are weak elderly women, but the charges shift to respected and well-integrated housewives, and also to at least one strong and independent man. Resistance against the scapegoating witch hunt comes from men *and* women.

In actual history as in the play, the prosecution of the witches is carried out by male-dominated institutions and is justified intellectually by males. (Historically, intellectual resistance also came from males, because hardly any female intellectuals existed at the time.) But it is not a simple scheming by men against women. Although mostly in a much weaker social position, women were deeply involved in the witch hunts. They may have had understandable reasons for their complicity such as defense against their weakness in the light of serious and life-threatening accusations, as in the case of Tituba in the play. But in other cases, dishonest or unethical motivations such as greed, rivalry with other women, superstition or psychological strain led them towards the initiation or the support of the destruction of other women or of men.

⁹ French 2012, p. 3 of 3.

One final disillusioning remark: In contrast to the Inquisition, it were not the dominant political or legal institutions which mostly set the witch hunts in motion against reluctant communities; in fact they were based on hysterical popular movements, with the authorities often following reluctantly, if at all. In the play, too, it is not the weak or exploited group in town which stands in for justice and progress. The ways in which the young ladies defend themselves against their weak social and material position or fight for improved status and at least some power is a pathological emancipation at best. Working on this lecture, the film *Das weiße Band* (The White Ribbon) of 2009 by the Austrian film maker Michael Haneke often came to my mind. In this film, the weakest members in an authoritarian German village society of 1913, the children, commit several crimes which remain unsolved. Their crimes are both a kind of protest against the terror which the adults practice against them *and* a reflection of the terror in the relationships between the adults themselves. In Arthur Miller's play, Abigail, the dominant girl among the young ladies, is 17. The judge expressly calls them "children", which they do not seem to appreciate.

3. Günter Grass, Israel, and anti-Semitism¹⁰

When I first read Günter Grass' poem "Was gesagt werden muss" (what needs to be said) about the conflict over Iran's nuclear weapons program and possible Israeli reactions, published in early April this year, I was immediately outraged about its inaccuracies and one-sidedness. At that time, I had been close to the end of a three months period of concentrated research on Israel's general security situation. I tend to be critical of Israel, particularly about the occupation of the territories and the domestic political and ideological forces driving it, and I am reluctant to accept mitigating circumstances for Israel's behavior in this connection. Grass' position, however, is definitely far outside any reasonable spectrum of criticism, and my concern about the public debate in Germany only increased when I saw the many positive reactions to the poem in letters to the editors and even from people I know, including some in the intellectual community and the remains of the peace movement. So I decided to build my analysis of the Israeli-Iranian nuclear weapons conflict around the issues raised in Grass' poem.

Günter Grass gives his political statement disguised as poetry the aura of a taboo-breaking warning cry. For the sake of world peace, someone finally had to speak frankly about what needed to be said, yet nobody had dared say so far. Almost nothing is correct or justified in

¹⁰ For more detailed information and analysis see Krell/Müller 2012.

the poem, however, neither in its attitude nor in its analysis. That Israel's status as a nuclear weapons state were a general taboo, is sheer fantasy. The whole politically alert world knows about these weapons and many experts write about it. As far as general criticism of Israel is concerned, reservations do exist, for obvious reasons particularly in Germany. It is also true that charges of anti-Semitism are often made rashly and without proper foundation, thus also devaluing the accusation. Yet one cannot seriously allege a major German tendency to ignore or keep quiet about the problems or the problematic nature of Israeli domestic and foreign policies.

As for the conflict about the Iranian nuclear weapons program, Grass is probably the only person of some standing in the whole world to suggest that Israel intends to attack Iran with nuclear weapons, risking global nuclear war. There is not the slightest evidence for this either in Israel's military planning or its political articulation, it is again pure fantasy. Just as strangely illusory and suspect is Grass' fear, Israel might "annihilate" the Iranian people in such an attack. He later added another reason for his fear, namely the release of nuclear material from Iranian reactors – again sheer fantasy. The risk of nuclear radiation from the destruction of any of the potential targets in Iran which Israel might wish to attack is negligible, as any nuclear physicist who has looked into this could have told him.

Yet Günter Grass goes even further. He not only insinuates an Israeli genocide, he also negates any share of responsibility for the crisis on the side of the Iranian government. Grass considers Mahmud Ahmadinedschad's regular announcements that Iran was indeed pursuing the goal of "annihilating" the "Zionist entity" as sheer big-mouthing. He does not say a word about the political and military connections between Iran and the Islamic militias in Lebanon and Gaza, which have followed their "big-mouthing" with action: suicide attacks and thousands of mortars or rockets fired on Israeli territory. He also calls Iran's nuclear weapons program an unproven assumption, ignoring that not only Israel or the West as a whole but the UN Security Council have unanimously sanctioned Iran because of this program, for which ample direct and circumstantial evidence exist.

Finally, the poet declares Israel a danger to world peace. He is not the only intellectual to do so, but he is again on very thin ground and again close to a classical anti-Semitic stereotype. Israel is not the only nuclear power in the world, and it can credibly maintain, in its theory as well its practice, that it regards its nuclear weapons exclusively as a last resort insurance against the risk of a serious conventional defeat endangering the survival of the state and its population. Ironically, Israel's status as the sole nuclear power in the region is seen as unjust

by most of its neighbors but not as a serious threat. Currently a number of Arab countries are more concerned about one Iranian nuclear bomb in the state of preparation than about 100 or 200 Israeli nuclear weapons already existing.

As for lack of general peace in the region, it would have been much more legitimate for Grass to criticize Israel, particularly Israel's policies vis-à-vis the Palestinians and the occupation. But again: even in the Middle East alone Israel is certainly not the only obstacle to a durable peace. The majority of conflicts there have nothing to do with Israel, as the current civil war in Syria with more than 10.000 victims so far and a serious potential for further escalation vividly demonstrates. To be sure: there is no reason to minimize the risks in a war between Israel and Iran. A number of factors make a drawn-out military confrontation between these two powers unlikely, but the economic consequences would probably reach beyond the region and expanding escalations cannot be excluded. But why does Grass single out Israel as the only cause of these risks and ignore its vulnerability towards even a very limited nuclear potential in the hands of a determined enemy?

Grass' criticism of Germany's delivery of a submarine which Israel will probably deploy with nuclear weapons follows his usual misrepresentations and misunderstandings. These nuclear-capable submarines are weapons of deterrence only; they would not even be used if Israel were in fact planning a nuclear attack on Iran – which is definitely not the case. It is infamous to call this delivery a German contribution to a foreseeable crime. If something needed to be criticized here, it is Germany's contribution to the weakening of the barriers against the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

In the controversy about his poem, Günter Grass has hardly made any concessions. He only admitted that he ought to have stated the difference between the Israeli government and the Israeli population more clearly. This admission does not make his position more acceptable, however. Israel's nuclear weapons and its policies of deterrence have always been supported by a broad majority of the parties and the population in Israel, and by all governments. Currently, a two-thirds majority of public opinion in Israel prefer an attack on Iran's nuclear weapons installations to a life in the shadow of a future Iranian bomb.

It is obvious to anyone who has taken a closer look at the situation that Günter Grass' analysis has nothing to do with the reality of the conflict between Israel and Iran; there is not the slightest correspondence with a broad base of serious and controversial scholarly or journalistic discussion. That leads to the urgent question, why Grass has biased his poem so excessive-

ly against Israel? Why has he imbued it with so many anti-Semitic connotations: one could not talk openly about Israeli (Jewish) power(s), which are hidden or kept secret; it took particular courage to criticize Israel (the Jews); Israel was (or the Jews were) a danger to world peace; Israel was (the Jews were) the sole source of the conflict with Iran. Why does he, who remained silent for too long about his brief and, fortunately, inconsequential participation in the German machinery of war and annihilation, fantasize secret Israeli (Jewish) plans of a nuclear attack with nuclear weapons risking the commission of genocide and a global nuclear catastrophe? Why does he at the same time belittle the dramatic vocabulary of the Iranian government against Israel and the Islamic Republic's military and political connections with groups already in violent conflict with Israel? And why does he use vocabulary setting the actual German genocide against the Jews and the moral burdens which it has brought upon his generation and Germany as a whole, in a close parallel with a fantasized coming Jewish mass crime?

There is only one explanation for this: In the *Teacher's Support Pack* for the play it says: "To solidify one's good name, it is necessary to publicly condemn – or even invent, I would add – the wrongdoing of others." The adaptation for the case under consideration here would be: to reduce the burden of sin resulting from the German mass murder of the Jews during the Nazi era, it is necessary to switch roles and burden the Jews (in the form of Israel) with a similar crime. Israel is, i.e. the Jews are not much better than we were, so we are quits now. Grass is not the only one to use this relief mechanism. In Germany, several opinion polls have resulted in 50 percent or more positive responses to the statement: "What Israel is doing to the Palestinians is not much different from what the Nazis did to the Jews." No wonder that Günter Grass' poem, a classical, even paradigmatic case of scapegoating, while heavily criticized in the quality media, found strong support in major sections of the public.

When discussing *The Crucible* in Germany, it is all the more important to point out structural parallels between the scapegoating process in the witch hunts and in anti-Semitism. As you probably all know, the term scapegoat (the German term "Sündenbock" is more telling) is of biblical origin. At Yom Kippur, the day of atonement in Jewry, the high priest would announce the sins of the people of Israel and transfer them symbolically on to a billy goat by laying his hands upon it, which is then sent into the desert. With the goat the sins are thus chased away. In the Old Testament, JHWH tells Moses in detail how to proceed. Interestingly, in the final version of the ritual, *two* goats are burdened with the sins and then sent away, i.e. sacrificed, one for JHWH and one for Azazel, the demon of the desert. (Similar rituals are

known from Mesopotamia or Anatolia. The billy goat, which is sacrificed to the devil, also plays a role in medieval legends, and it is an important symbol in representations of witchcraft.)¹¹

Sacrificing animals to calm the gods or the demons is a very ancient and quite common practice among pre-modern cultures. A more disturbing variation was the sacrifice of children, often but not only the first-born male, a practice which, according to the Bible, JHWH ended when Abraham showed his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac to prove his fidelity to Him. (Just as a footnote: Circumcision of male babies is a mostly harmless and symbolical remainder of these ancient practices of sacrifice, and today some Jewish families have begun to make this rite fully symbolical by giving up its material dimension.) Let me only add that Christianity has changed the relationship between human beings, their sins, and God much further. Christians believe that God himself sacrificed his own son who, in this sacrifice, is taking the world's sins upon him.

Communal witch hunts and violent anti-Semitism both reverse this process back to the sacrifice of human beings by their own kin. The major difference from ancient rites is that the communities no longer, as a rule, sacrifice members of their own families such as their newborn babies. In the witch hunts, any member of the community, usually adults or at least grown-ups, can become victimized. In violent anti-Semitism, the victims are – as the term implies – members of a certain group in the community. Traditionally, anti-Semitic stigmatization was based on religious confession and practice. Modern, especially NAZI anti-Semitism was based on seemingly more scientific biological criteria, but were often applied or had to be applied arbitrarily – remember Göhring's famous dictum: "Wer Jude ist, bestimme ich" (I decide who is a Jew). Generally, stigmatization can be based on any criterion, such as hair or skin colour, e.g.

Both types of victimization, violent witch hunts as well as violent anti-Semitism, share a devious practice and a destructive illusion. The devious practice is the burdening of other human beings with responsibility for alleged sinful, dangerous or otherwise unwelcome behavior or influence without any serious evidence, and their punishment through discrimination, persecution, exclusion, various forms of imprisonment and finally violent death. The destructive illusion is the belief on the part of the perpetrators that, by eliminating the alleged external sources of all kinds of evils, they could achieve or regain their strength, legitimacy,

¹¹ See Wikipedia, *Sündenbock*, pp. 1 and 2 of 4.

physical and psychological security, political unity, and moral or even “racial purity”. Yet material greed, lust for power, sexual desires, envy, ambition, psychological or material insecurity, superstition, prejudice, fear, violent rage, yes sin, are *within* the persecutors; *they* are, and we all can be, the source of the problem. There is ample proof of this in *The Crucible*.

4. Germany’s Fall and Prejudice Against Muslims and the Lower Classes¹²

Thilo Sarrazin’s *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (Germany’s fall), first published in 2010, is the second best-selling and the most intensely discussed book in the whole history of the Federal Republic. Reactions have been highly controversial. Even among my own friends and acquaintance, the spectrum ranges from “I will never read such a racist book” to “an order of merit for Thilo Sarrazin”. I have wavered in my own reactions between concern about many of the tendencies he seems to describe essentially correctly on the one hand, and anger about his polemics, his arrogance, his righteousness and dubiousness on the other. After reading the book twice and a lot of material about and around it, I have come to the conclusion that there are two Thilo Sarrazins: a classical Social Democrat *and* something like a reactionary Prussian landowner; an author who openly claims there was not one mistake in his book *and* a flexible and clever discussant; a cosmopolitan citizen *and* a prejudiced nationalist. Thilo Sarrazin is not a racist, but he uses literature carelessly which is more racist than he is, and sometimes he employs biologicistic terminology. On the first page of his text, he speaks about “Fäulnisprozesse” (processes of rotting) in our society, for instance. Before I mention a few examples of his own ways of prejudice and scapegoating, I will first summarize the major points of his book:

Demographically, Germany is a shrinking society, which will create problems not only for maintaining essential infrastructure in many of its regions but also strain its generational arrangements for the pension funds. The demographic shrinkage will require additional efforts to keep or even improve its current level of productivity and international competitiveness. The problem is not so much that we all tend to get older and live longer; it is the relative lack of children and young people, a process which may be called “Unterjüngung” in German. These strains are reinforced by much too generous welfare expenditures. They reduce the incentives in parts of the old-established German lower classes and of many Germans with a migration background to become active and productive members of the work force. These

¹² For a much more detailed analysis with footnotes and references see my paper *Deutschlands Fall* of 2012, also on my website.

general trends are further aggravated by “dysgenic” effects of differences in generative behavior between the old-established well-educated classes (the “Bildungsschicht”) on the one hand and other much less well educated sections of the population, most importantly immigrants with a Muslim background on the other. The more intelligent classes in Germany have much fewer children than the classes with more limited intellectual abilities. Since intelligence is mostly inherited, Germany will thus become an increasingly less well educated country; or to put it more bluntly: its population will grow more and more stupid on average.

Let me point out in a first comment that similar scenarios were already discussed in Victorian Britain in the 19th century, in Germany around the turn of the 19th to the 20th century in light of Catholic immigration into Prussia from Poland, or in the United States before and during the First World War. The arguments about dumb immigrants or lazy lower classes with high reproduction rates have not changed that much. Sarrazin’s dark vision depends on a number of debatable assumptions and on data which are highly controversial even in the expert literature. Average reproduction rates of “dumb”, i.e. mostly Muslim, immigrants are quickly approaching the average numbers of children in traditional German families. There may be more rise and decline in the generational intelligence levels in both the well and the less well educated classes than Sarrazin is willing to admit. And, most importantly, even if intelligence is inherited to a large extent, there still remains much room for improvement through better and earlier schooling – a point which Sarrazin admits to a large extent. He makes a very strong case for major changes in our educational system to get the best out of *all* children in Germany, a pleading which most people in Germany would probably agree with easily. The problem here is that Sarrazin himself cut all the programs which he recommends in his book, when he was Senator of Finance in Berlin.

I cannot discuss questions of the heritability of intelligence here. I only want to say that this a much more complicated issue than Sarrazin often suggests. The geneticist Elsbeth Stern, an expert whom he quotes himself, responded with a flat no to the question by a journalist, whether the average IQ in Germany would collapse if the Germans from the lower half of the IQ distribution had more children than the others. Intelligence was only one component of human competence, she said. For most demands in the academic world you did not have to be a superman (or -woman), and a lower level of intelligence could be compensated by stronger efforts. Parents with IQs above average could have children with IQs below it and the other way round. The greater danger for a decline of the average IQ in Germany was the strong social bias in its school system.

Dieter E. Zimmer, a well-known science journalist, recently published a book on intelligence and heredity.¹³ On the central scientific question, the largely genetic determination of some of the basic functions in the brain's intelligence system, he comes out on Sarrazin's side. But he does not agree with his data on the Muslims. Sarrazin says in the book, immigrants from Turkey and from Arab countries had major structural deficiencies in their mathematical PISA results, a result of a special mix of Islamic religiosity and traditional ways of life. Zimmer found that a difference does indeed exist, but it is relatively small: 5 MQ points. (MQ is a kind of mathematical IQ.) In addition, there were also differences among Islamic countries, something which Sarrazin had not taken into account. These differences also reach up to 5 MQ points, which is the same difference as that between Islamic and non-Islamic countries. Actually, the mathematical deficit of 5 MQ points is not an "Islamic" deficit; it is a deficit of the whole Mediterranean area, the cause of which is as yet unknown. Turkish children share this difference, which is not larger or smaller than the difference between German-German pupils and pupils in Singapore.¹⁴

This is only one example of a tendency on Sarrazin's part to single out immigrants with an Islamic background as a source of at least some of Germany's problems. He hardly ever mentions major differences among German Muslims or differences between Germany and other countries with a major share of Muslim immigrants. Children with Turkish backgrounds are more successful in some *Bundesländer* than in others, in the Netherlands they are generally much better at school than in all of Germany. Second generation immigrants in Great Britain or in Sweden achieve much better school qualifications than in Germany, where they often cannot even maintain their parents' levels. According to several official and some unofficial reports, pupils with an Islamic background achieve much better results at school than Thilo Sarrazin's data suggest. Jobless rates for migrants are also worse in Sarrazin's book than in other reports.

Another striking feature in the book are the data and the interpretation of female headscarves, for Thilo Sarrazin a major symbol of Germany's foreign infiltration, the lack of willingness on the part of Muslim immigrants to integrate themselves, and of their educational deficits. As a number of serious studies show, the connections Sarrazin is making here are much less clear or much weaker and the motives for wearing headscarves much broader than he is assuming.

¹³ Zimmer 2012.

¹⁴ A.a.O., pp. 218-223. Christian Schüle's review of the book (in: DIE ZEIT Nr. 48, July 5, 2012, p. 48) puts Zimmer too close to Sarrazin; he does not even mention this criticism, e.g.

And his data are questionable again. He suggests, the wearing of headscarves by Muslim women and girls in Germany were on the rise. Data by the Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees show the opposite: the younger the women or girls, the lower the share of those who regularly wear headscarves.

It cannot come as a surprise when I add that Thilo Sarrazin is not only biased against immigrants with a Muslim background, he is also biased against Islam in general. He is by no means alone in this. Germany is one of the Western countries most strongly prejudiced against Muslims and Islam. In the new Bundesländer, 74 percent of the people polled argued the Muslims in Germany were a burden, although only 1.3 percent of the population there *are* Muslims.¹⁵ In the whole of Germany, 50 percent or more do not want the Muslims to practice their religion, only about one third agree that they build mosques.

Thilo Sarrazin appreciates that 95 percent (his figure) of the Muslims in Germany are peaceful. But he also alleges a strong connection between Islam and violence; he does not see a clear dividing line between Islam and Islamism. One of the reasons for Islamic violence was that the Koran itself was ambiguous about it. That leads to the question, whether Sarrazin has ever taken a look at the Bible, which also contains many extremely violent and brutal passages and commandments. No one can or will deny that Islam is confronted with major and serious challenges, yet the history of Christianity is also full of violence and intolerance. The Christian Churches were stalwarts of monarchies and dictatorships for hundreds of years, even partners of fascist movements and regimes, before they gradually, in the course of the 20th century, accepted and supported democracy and human rights.

According to Thilo Sarrazin, the Muslims in Germany and in Europe are governed by a “foreign cultural and religious influence which we cannot survey let alone direct”.¹⁶ He thus constructs them as a sinister and shady “other”. Does Islam belong to Germany? Our history has been influenced by Islam; without Islamic mediation and communication fundamental elements of our culture would not exist. And there can be no doubt that the Muslims who live here legally belong to Germany. Since our constitution grants religious freedom to everyone, Muslims have a right to practice their rites. Their overwhelming majority does that in completely unproblematic ways and in many different forms and intensities. By implication then, Islam also belongs to Germany, inasmuch and as far it is compatible with our constitution.

¹⁵ Incidentally, the number of Jews in the Weimar Republic came very close to that figure as well.

¹⁶ Sarrazin 2010, p. 227, my translation.

The freedom of religion just as that of political ideologies ends, where violence begins. That concerns violent Salafists, a small minority within a tiny minority among the Muslims in Germany, just as German-German Neo-Nazis. No doubt, Islamic terrorism is a serious, often lethal problem – mostly for other Muslims, but also for many other people around the world and in many, not just in Arab countries. Stigmatizing all Muslims as potentially violent and constructing the immigration of Muslims as a kind of infiltration by uncontrollable and sinister “others”, however, as Sarrazin does to some extent, can be a major ideological source of “white” terrorism, too, as Anders Breivik’s distressingly mad and cold-blooded killing-spree demonstrates. The Intercultural Museum in Oslo displays a photograph from a visit by Fabian Stang, the mayor of Oslo, to the mosque at Groenland. During this visit he said: “The killer was a white, Christian man living in my neighbourhood, but you do not brand me as a possible killer. Thank you!”¹⁷

Does immigration create problems? Of course it does, on both sides. Are there problems of integration? Yes, even major ones. Thilo Sarrazin is right when he suggests that some sections of the political class and of the public in Germany have not taken them seriously enough. But his own analysis of these problems is often excessive or even wrong and his attitude clearly more accusing and demanding than supporting. It is imbued with bourgeois resentment and in some instances even xenophobia bordering on racism. He tells millions of decent inhabitants in this country, the former “Gastarbeiter”, that it had been a mistake to allow them to settle and start families here. He sees beams in the eyes of the immigrants (and the lower classes in Germany in general), but not even splinters in those of the well-to-do German-Germans. Thus he “unleashes the desire of the more comfortably off (...) to speak badly about the more badly off”, as Patrick Bahners, the former chief of the FAZ’s culture section, has suggested in his book about German Islam critics.¹⁸

How does all this connect with the play? Well, as I have argued here, scapegoating may also occur in cases in which those unfairly or one-sidedly burdened with responsibilities for joint problems in a community are not completely innocent. It can even happen in cases of really evil people. Some psychologists call this “Realexternalisierung” (real-externalisation). Saddam Hussein, e.g., really was a nasty dictator, a violent tyrant and conqueror, and a threat to the security of his neighbors as well as to basic principles of world order. Yet almost all the

¹⁷ The quotation is from a photograph taken by a friend of mine in the museum, when we were in Oslo in July this year.

¹⁸ Bahners 2011, p. 283.

parties which in the end had to fight against him used the conflict to release themselves from their own burdens of co-responsibility. They had all sinned in the long process of increasing instability in the Golf region, but now felt cleared as they could point at another, even more obvious sinner.¹⁹

There is a somewhat analogous situation in the play, yet with a different solution. Abigail bears major real responsibility for the escalation and the victimization of innocent people at Salem. So John Proctor has all the right to take up the fight and accuse her of wrongdoing, all the more so since she had admitted at an early stage that no evil had occurred, no devils had been involved in a simple dancing party. Yet he also knows that he has to admit his own wrong-doing first: the affair he had with her when she worked as a servant in his family. To be sure, he has practical reasons to make his fault public. In order to save his wife, he must uncover Abigail's motivation for her deadly scheming against Elisabeth. He would become an active party to the whole detested blame-game himself, however, were he to attack Abigail without discussing his own wrong-doing. Among the many strong political and moral messages of the play, this may be the strongest one.

¹⁹ So scapegoating can also be mutual. When people, groups, or states are in conflict, they often exaggerate the „threat“ or burden the other party with more responsibility for it than is appropriate – mostly in order to relieve the burden of sin or responsibility on their own side. They also often use an enemy and the threat it poses to deflect or contain criticism of their rule at home. That is definitely the case in the conflict between Israel and Iran, in addition to the genuine security problems involved. Iran literally depicts the United States and Israel as Satans, in order to bolster its devious and brutal theocracy. Prime Minister Netanjahu is hyping up the Iranian threat to put pressure on US President Obama and his election campaign, and also to deflect criticism of his policies (or rather non-policies) vis-à-vis the Palestinians.

References:

Patrick Bahners, *Die Panikmacher: Die deutsche Angst vor dem Islam – Eine Streitschrift*, Munich 2011

Paul French, *Tale of the Dragon Lady: The long, sordid history behind China's blame-the-woman syndrome*, www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/06/26/tale_of_the_dragon_lady (August 13, 2012)

Gert Krell, *Weltbilder und Weltordnung: Einführung in die Theorie der internationalen Beziehungen, fourth edition*, Baden-Baden 2009

Ders., *Grass und die Bombe*, in: *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* 57:5 (2012), pp. 39-48

Ders., *Geschlechterverhältnisse – zwischen Gewalt und Frieden*, Lecture given on April 27, 2012, at the commemoration of the victimization of “witches” by the Electoral Mogontian Court at Hofheim, 15 pp. (can be downloaded from my website: www.gert-krell.de)

Ders., *Deutschland Fall: Ein Rückblick auf Thilo Sarrazins Buch „Deutschland schafft sich ab“*, 41 pp. (can be downloaded from my website: www.gert-krell.de)

Gert Krell/Harald Müller, *Noch ein Krieg im Nahen Osten: Zum misslungenen Anstoß von Günter Grass zu einer überfälligen öffentlichen Debatte*, HSK-Report 2/2012, Frankfurt/Main (can be downloaded from PRIF's website: www.hsfk.de)

Thilo Sarrazin, *Deutschland schafft sich ab: Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen*, München 2010

Wikipedia, s.v. *Hexenverfolgung, McCarthyism, Scapegoating, Sündenbock* (August 13, 2012)

Dieter E. Zimmer, *Ist Intelligenz erblich? Ein Klarstellung*, Reinbek near Hamburg 2012