

The puritan beliefs in the crucible

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



In every society, the progression of one group of people directly leads to the subjugation of another. In the Puritan society as depicted in *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, women were minorities who were weaker and deceptive in nature. This led to the conceived idea that they were often associated with evil things such as witchcraft as well as less respected within the Puritan society.

For example, Abigail saw confessing as a sign of relief. To solve her moral problem, Abigail started to blame other girls in town. Elizabeth Proctor is accused of keeping poppets in her home. The poppet is a doll with voodoo magic used to harm people. It wasn't a good look for Elizabeth, from the outside looking in because a poppet was found in her home with a needle stuck in the stomach area. Abigail sabotaged Elizabeth's reputation in court when she brought up that she had been stabbed in the stomach, revealing that Elizabeth had something to do with Abigail's injury. The conversation between Cheever and Proctor stated, Cheever, I am given sixteen warrants tonight, sir, and she is one. Proctor, Who charged her? Cheever, Why, Abigail Williams charge her. Proctor, On what proof, what proof? Cheever, Mr. Proctor, I have little time. The court bid me search your house, but I like not to search a house. So will you hand me any poppet's that your wife may keep here? Cheever has been given several warrants for individuals to search their homes and Elizabeth Proctor happened to be one of them. Proctor was shocked that his wife may be involved. Abigail continues to fail to solve her moral problem and in doing so is placing the blame upon others.

There were several incidents within the novel in which women were observed as less than man and the validity of their statements was

questioned. To illustrate this idea, upon being accused the first time, Abigail confesses to dancing, but not conjuring spirits. After further interrogation by Parris and Hale, Abigail incriminates Tituba, saying she conjured spirits and tried to force the girls to sell themselves to the Devil, but they would not (Miller 45). Abigail's story changes repeatedly, causing people to question when she is really telling the truth, or when she is simply lying to keep herself safe. Elizabeth's falsehood, though still not excusable, is much more valiant than Abigail's. While Abigail's lies were formed to protect herself, Elizabeth lies in order to protect her husband. When questioned about John Proctor's alleged affair with Abigail Williams, Elizabeth tells the court that the information is false. Unfortunately, her lie is obvious because her husband had already confessed outside of her knowledge (Miller 113). There were two distinct groups of women in *The Crucible*, both of which had their flaws. On one hand, Abigail Williams and the other girls wielded their power through manipulation and dishonesty. They were weak, and looked out for themselves only. Elizabeth Proctor and Rebecca Nurse, though convicted of witchcraft, held their own, and refused to admit to a crime they were not guilty of. These two, Elizabeth and Rebecca showed an entirely different type of power than Abigail as they are much more noble characters, even though they were looked down on by the male authorities. But this natural tendency of the society to mistrust these women demonstrates the inequality and unfairness for them.

When Abigail is accused of being associated with witchcraft she states, I want the light of God, I want the sweet love of Jesus! I danced for the Devil; I saw him; I wrote in his book; I go back to Jesus; I kiss His hand. After

proclaiming this, the religious officials of Salem are left, in essence, with no choice but to believe her. The main quality admired and expected of women in *The Crucible* is submissiveness. It is clear from the play that Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692, was largely a patriarchal society. Power in the hands of women was looked down on and even feared. Any leverage that women had was gained solely through manipulation. If the men suspected a woman of interacting with the Devil, she was expected to submit to their authority and confess her crime. If she rebelled and refused to confess, she was sentenced to death, no questions asked. However, the same was also true for men, though they were much more seldom found guilty of witchcraft. In *The Crucible*, women are commonly caught in lies. Not only are the manipulative girls, such as Abigail Williams, prone to lying, but Elizabeth Proctor is also caught lying.

On the other hand, there are those who argue women played an important part in society and had power when making decisions regarding witchcraft. This is true because the jury believed Abigail Williams when she was giving her testimony about accusing other women of being involved with witchcraft. In order to convince the people, she had to be deceptive in lying about details to hide the truth. Therefore, women are still fulfilling the deceptive figure role as this would have been the only way for them to be heard.

The author's writing is a reflection of the Puritan beliefs within the society at the time. Women were seen as less than men and had no validity despite their position. There has been and always will be groups to be marginalized

and treated unfairly in any society. The best and only thing people can do is create the change so that this doesn't happen in future societies.