

Arthur miller about witches

Literature, American Literature



Arthur Miller was a famous playwright, author, and film writer in the mid-20th century, who published many works, one of them being *The Crucible*. Born in 1915, Miller was raised in New York City, a peak area to establish a love for the arts due to its grand displays of plays and shows. Miller grew up in a failing household, so he worked for a decent amount of time in an auto-parts warehouse, before attending college at the University of Michigan.

During his time in school, Miller won two Avery Hopwood awards for his early work in playwriting. After school Miller returned to New York to pursue this career, and had several small releases while writing for the Federal Theater Project, the Columbia Workshop, and the Cavalcade of America. In 1947, Millerr's career boomed. Some of his many successes included *All of my Sons*, *Death of a Salesman*, and his famous play *The Crucible*. Some of Millers awards he won include the Theater Guild National Prize, Antoinette Perry Award, Emmy Award, and even a Pulitzer Prize award for drama.

Millerr's view on the world can be interpreted through his many works he created, in which he saw the realism in everyday life, and avoided the fake masks placed over most things. Arthur lived a full life, passing away in early 2005 in Connecticut, leaving behind the legacy he created in New York (Arthur Miller). Throughout his playwright career, Arthur Miller addressed many social and political issues. In Millerr's *The Crucible*, he confronts the hard truth of what peopler's behavior did during the Salem witch trials to seemingly innocent women, along with relating it to Senator Joseph McCarthy's desire to expose alleged communists in the federal government and Hollywood in the early 1950r's. *The Crucible* tells the true and saddening tales of several women being persecuted and killed for being accused as

witches without viable proof, and his annoyance with the people of Salem can be interpreted through the text. Miller personally faces McCarthy's crazed hunt for communists by indirectly comparing it to the lengths people went through during the Salem witch trials to expose weird neighbors or people they disliked. While it takes some thought and consideration, it is easy to interpret Miller's opinions and views through his work and the way he portrays characters in his stories (Schechter).

During the colonial period of early American history, Massachusetts held some very extreme religious and political views. Early Massachusetts was populated by very devout Puritans who traveled from England to escape the discriminatory Catholic and Anglican churches. The settlers were mainly influenced by John Winthrop, who preached to the people that they should create a City upon a Hill, or a model Christian society. The people of the early Massachusetts Bay Colony were very influenced by their desire to uphold their Puritan ideals, so they limited political opportunities to people of their church, and made Puritanism the state-wide religion. Tens of thousands of Puritans seeking religious freedom came to Massachusetts within the next decade, and Puritanism became nearly the only religion of the state. Within the next years, the Puritan church established the idea of predestination, that a select devoted few were hand-chosen by God to be saved after life, which caused the religious citizens to abide by all of the church's laws and rules in worship and charitableness. When people such as Roger Williams, Salem's Puritan minister, tried to institute true religious freedom in Massachusetts, they were banished from the state, forced to find a new place to live. The people of colonial Massachusetts believed both men and

women could be saved by God in the afterlife, but women were still the inferior gender. This political view of the people made female preachers such as the upcoming Anne Hutchinson in Massachusetts Bay have very difficult times thriving. Hutchinson was wrongfully accused of disregarding the rules of the Puritan church and was banished, similarly to Roger Williams. Early Massachusetts settlers had many contradictory laws to what they previously believed when they lived in the Old World. Puritans migrated to Massachusetts Bay to seek religious asylum from the growing Church of England, but when they got established, the people didn't allow religious freedom to people that did not belong to the Puritan Church. Overall, Massachusetts had some very extreme religious and political views during the colonial era and the beginnings of their colony and state (Henretta et al. 61-63).

The beliefs of witches and witchcraft held by the people of the New England colonies in the late seventeenth century were awoken by a group of girls in Salem, Massachusetts who took the tales told by a West Indian slave woman too seriously. The girls took deep interest in her tales of voodoo and sorcery, and got too caught up in the witch-craze to back out, starting a town-wide witch hunt, including neighbors accusing neighbors, poor accusing rich, and visa versa (Bacon). During the late seventeenth century, adolescent girls had the lowest amount of power in the community of Salem due to the sexist class structure. When a group of adolescent girls believed they had witnessed witchcraft, the whole class structure was pushed aside to allow these girls to share their stories. The desire to expose witches and those dabbling in the devil's work was so great, that the widely inferior were given

the utmost priority. Witches during this era could be described through many seemingly ridiculous ways. For one, witches could often be found flying on brooms to designated meeting places where they would sign over their souls in the devil's book. The simplest things would be blamed on witchcraft during this chaotic era. Farm animals dying, crops failing, and even sudden illnesses would be blamed on rivals or neighbors using sorcery to bring them defeat. The typical accused witch would be a middle-aged woman who had no kids and was not the ideal submissive lady. Suspected witches would be held in jail, with ironclads around their legs so they would be unable to fly away and escape. If proven a witch, a woman would be burned at a stake, or more commonly hung publicly at the gallows. Over 200 people were accused of being witches and 20 were executed. Accused women often had no way out, so they would have to result to accusing different women in exchange for a lesser sentence. The early seventeenth century was a rough time for women, as being accused of being a witch had no recovery (Collins).

McCarthyism was a campaign to expose hidden communists in the US government in the early to mid 1950's, headed by a man named Joseph McCarthy. McCarthy was a Wisconsin Senator in the 1950s, who made ludicrous accusations that people of power in the United States were secretly communists. During the 1950s, there was great concerns of post-war retaliations, and many people feared that communists had infiltrated the American government. So much so, that a Wisconsin Senator was able to follow through with a witch hunt comparable to the Salem witch trials on a mission to seek out and expose hidden alleged communists in society. McCarthy started the chaos by giving a speech in which he shared that he

personally knew 2015 card-carrying members of the Communist party that had successfully infiltrated the US government. In early 1950, McCarthy went to the senate with many fallible claims of proof of communists intervening. No matter how unreliable the evidence was, or whether he used the same stories on different people, the Senate listened intently and called for a full investigation. The general public did nothing to stop the accusations of innocent people, and often helped provide possible communist spies to the government. McCarthy influenced politics in the 1950s by restarting the communist witch hunts and bringing fear of the red plague back into the eyes of American citizens. He brought the ridiculous trials of the Salem witch hunt back in a modern way, but with the same dubious claims and unreliable evidence lacking of real proof (McCarthyism).