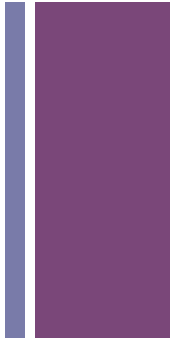


Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*, The Salem Witch Trials, and McCarthyism

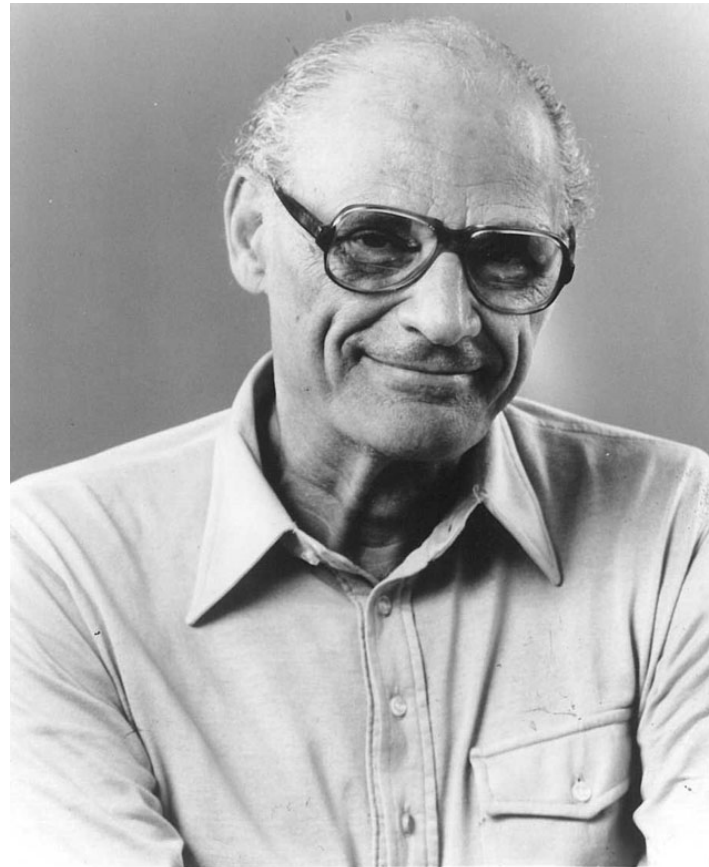
What do they all have in common????



Things to Know about Arthur Miller

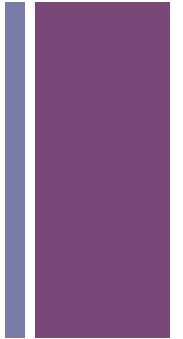


- 1915-2005
- Grew up in a working class family; worked as a teenager to earn money to go to college
- Considered one of America's greatest playwrights—wrote *The Crucible*, *Death of a Salesman*, and *All My Sons*
- Confessed to attending Communist meetings in the 1950s and was arrested when he refused to reveal the names of others who were there





McCarthyism and the Salem Witch Trials



McCarthyism

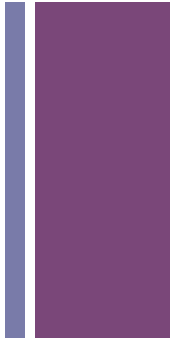
- A period in the 1950s when many public figures, ranging from actors and actresses to politicians, were suspected of holding secret Communist meetings
- Spearheaded by Senator Joseph McCarthy
- People were questioned by a special congressional committee and were expected to confess their own participation as well as that of their friends

Salem Witch Trials

- Began in the late 1600s when several girls and a slave, Tituba, were caught dancing in the forest and were suspected of participating in witchcraft.
- A combination of extreme Puritan views, paranoia, and hysteria led to this outcome:
- 150 accused
- 19 hanged
- 1 crushed



Why are we talking about the Salem Witch Trials and McCarthyism?



- Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* is set against the backdrop of the Salem Witch Trials.
- However, he wrote the play to draw a parallel between the Salem Witch Trials and McCarthyism.

The play is clearly a metaphor:

- The Salem Witch Trials falsely accused 150 people of practicing witchcraft

A metaphorical witch hunt in which people anyone suspected of communism was persecuted.



Parallels between Salem Witch Trials and McCarthyism

- Both events showed what can happen when paranoia controls people's minds and actions.
- Both events put people in a lose-lose situation

--In the Salem Witch Trials, people had to confess to witchcraft and face public condemnation, or be hanged.

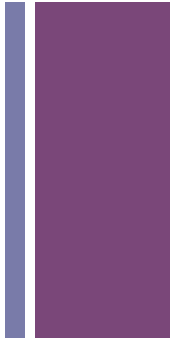
--In the McCarthy hearings, people had to reveal their Communist involvement or be arrested for contempt of court.



WITCHCRAFT AT SALEM VILLAGE



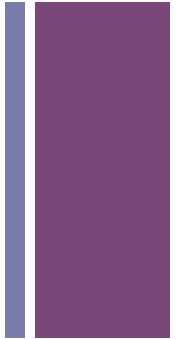
Drama Terms / *The Crucible* Terms



- En medias res: “in the middle of things”; a play begins at a point when something significant has already taken place
- Theocracy: a government that is controlled strictly by the Word of God
- Conjure: to call a spirit
- Crucible: a container that can withstand high heat
 - But , in this case, a crucible is a severe test, trial, or challenge.
 - Also, a crucible can be a situation characterized by conflict.



Drama Terms / *The Crucible* Terms



- Afflicted: spiritually harassed
- Spectral evidence: testimony given based on a “supernatural” occurrence
- Base: stupid
- Goody: term for Mrs., addressing a married woman
- Poppet: doll

+ Themes:

-
- Intolerance
- Deception
- Hysteria
- Justice
- Martyrdom
- Appearance vs. Reality
- Reputation

