

Background: Puritanism

Puritanism is a Christian faith which originated in England during the early seventeenth century. The ideals, which separate Puritans from other Christians include their strict belief in predestination.

This term refers to the idea that God has previously chosen those who will be saved, and an individual can do nothing to change this status. The Puritan Covenant of Grace calls for all Puritans to be actively faithful. The Covenant of Works is the belief that those who follow God's moral codes will be blessed with eternal life.

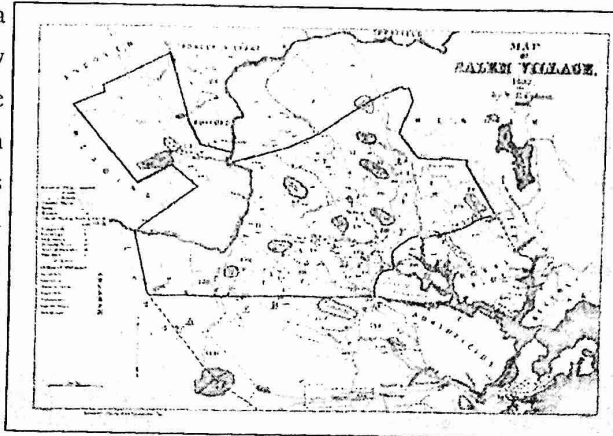
The Puritans split from the Church of England in 1633. When William Laud became the new Archbishop of Canterbury, the new beliefs he brought were unacceptable to those members who sought to "purify" the Church.

These new beliefs included emphasis on individual acceptance or rejection of God's grace, tolerance for a variety of religious beliefs, and the incorporation of "high church" symbols. The Puritans wished to rid their religion of all Catholic influence.

Early in the seventeenth century, groups of Puritans began leaving Europe to travel to the American colonies. The New England region became the center for Puritans, but the group was spread throughout the area north of Virginia. The main

goal of these immigrants was to form a religious community in

which their "pure" ideals could be central. The radical beliefs of the Puritans flourished in the New World. By keeping a strong connection between Church and State, the Puritans were able to control most of the colonies' activity until the end of the seventeenth century.



This map shows the locations of major landmarks, farms, land grants, physical features, and the dwellings of prominent and important residents in Salem 1692.

The Puritans: Five Basic Beliefs

Total Depravity: *By virtue of the original sin of Adam, when one is born, he has no right to salvation.*

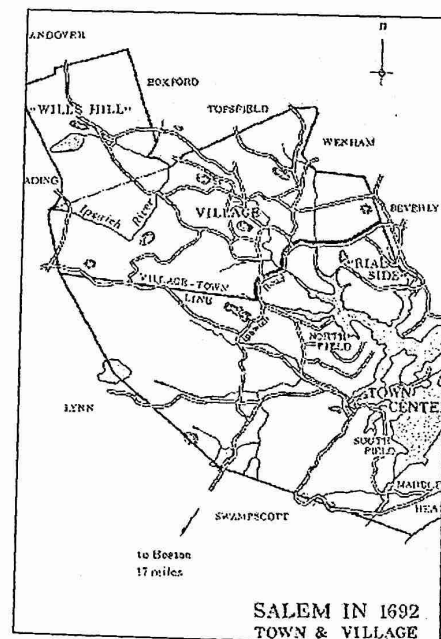
Unconditional Election: *Some are chosen for salvation, some are not. There is nothing one can do to change his status.*

Limited Atonement: *The extent to which one can please God with acts is limited.*

Irresistible Grace: *God showers one with a quality of grace, and one cannot resist it.*

Perseverance: *Once one has been saved, nothing he does will change that fact.*

These central beliefs, along with an extreme emphasis on preaching and the laws contained within the Bible itself formed the strict ideals of American Puritanism.



Arthur Miller 1915 - 2005



He was a great playwright, a great man, and a man of rare integrity in his writing. He was a landmark and a leader. Harold Pinter, London, 2005

Born: Manhattan, 1915
Died: Roxbury, Connecticut, 2005

Overview

Arthur Miller transformed American theatre. Following the end of World War II, he tapped into a sense of dissatisfaction and unrest within the greater American psyche. His dramas were provocative, insightful and probing. He became the 'public conscience'. Regarded as a brilliant writer, a staunch humanitarian, and a man of great dignity, it is said that not a day goes by when one of Miller's plays is not being performed somewhere in the world.

Major Works

All My Sons (1947), *Death of a Salesman* (1949, won the Pulitzer Prize), *The Crucible* (1953), *A View from the Bridge* (1955), *The Misfits* (1961 screenplay).



A young Arthur Miller

Family

Parents: Jewish immigrants, Isidore and Augusta Miller.
Father: a ladies wear manufacturer.
Mother: a school teacher and housewife.
Sister: actress Joan Copeland.
Brother: Kermit.

Major Themes

Moral plight of the working class - moral responsibility - struggles of conscience - sociopolitical commentaries - betrayal - death - injustice.



Miller in his later years, photographed by his wife Inge Morath.

School

Graduated from high school and paid his way through college. Attended University of Michigan, 1934-38. Bachelor of English with honorary degrees worldwide.

Major Influences

The Great Depression years - watching his father's desperation due to business failures - anti-Semitism - McCarthyism - politics - love.

Marriage

m. Mary Slattery, 1940-1956 (college sweetheart, two children: Jane and Robert);
m. Marilyn Monroe, 1956-1961 (movie icon - met through Elia Kazan);
m. Inge Morath, 1962 (photographer - met on the set of *The Misfits*), married 40 years until her death in 2002, two children: Daniel and Rebecca);
in 2004 Miller announced his engagement to Agnes Barley, 34, with whom he had been living since 2002.

Arthur Miller with Marilyn Monroe in 1961, on the set of *The Misfits* which is the screenplay he wrote for her. They were only married for five years and this was Monroe's longest marriage. "I'd say out of the five we had two good years, but her addiction to pills and drugs defeated me," said Miller. Yet the marriage compounded Miller's fame.



Did You Know?

Definition: Crucible (n)

1. A severe test, as of patience or belief; a trial.
2. A place, time, or situation characterized by the confluence of powerful intellectual, social, economic, or political forces.
3. A metal container used to heat material to a very high temperature.
4. A hollow area at the bottom of a furnace where metal collects

Miller also wrote the screenplay of the film version of *The Crucible*, which featured Winona Ryder, and his son-in-law Daniel Day-Lewis, who was married to Miller's daughter Rebecca.

DID
YOU
KNOW

The Language of 1692

Miller used the 'colour' of language in *The Crucible* to help create the tone of 17th century Salem with dialect choices imbedded in the script. He chose a rustic, colloquial sound, partly based on Salem records, with echoes of the King James bible; not unlike a dialect still heard today in rural southern England. Miller achieved his effect by changing verb tenses, linking words unusually and by the use of archaic words and double negatives, (e.g. 'not' with 'no', or 'never').

"You should surely know that Cain were an upright man, and yet he did kill Abel." (Parris, Act 3);

"He cannot discover no medicine for it in his books."
(Susanna, Act 1);

Old-fashioned words set the tone from the beginning: *bid* for 'told', *unnatural* for 'supernatural', *witched* for 'bewitched', *sport* for 'fun', *aye* and *nay* for 'yes and no'. And as Puritans, the characters often quote or allude to the Bible, which Miller uses to remind us of the strict religious code they lived by:

'Abigail brings the other girls into the court, and where she walks the crowd will part like the sea for Israel.' (Elizabeth, Act 2)

'You should surely know that Cain were an upright man, and yet he did kill Abel.' (Parris, Act 3).

Spectral Evidence

Arthur Miller: *At a certain point, the high court of the province made the fatal decision to admit, for the first time, the use of "spectral evidence" as proof of guilt. Spectral evidence meant that if I swore that you had sent out your 'familiar spirit' to choke, tickle, poison me or my cattle, or to control thoughts and actions, I could get you hanged unless you confessed to having had contact with the Devil. After all, only the Devil could lend such powers of visible transport to confederates, in his everlasting plot to bring down Christianity.*



Arthur Miller in 1956

Miller was one of the original founders of International PEN's Writers in Prison committee, and in 1965 was elected its president, which was a position he held for four years.

Arthur Miller on writing *The Crucible*.

The Crucible was an act of desperation. Much of my desperation branched out, I suppose, from a typical Depression-era trauma - the blow struck on the mind by the rise of European Fascism and the brutal anti-Semitism it had brought to power. But by 1950, when I began to think of writing about the hunt for Reds in America, I was motivated in some great part by the paralysis that had set in among many liberals who, despite their discomfort with the inquisitors' violations of civil rights, were fearful, and with good reason, of being identified as covert Communists if they should protest too strongly.

The Political Stage



Senator Joseph Raymond McCarthy

McCarthyism grew out of the Second Red Scare that began in the late 1940s and is named after U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy, a Republican of Wisconsin with a particular zeal in uncovering the 'reds'. Many parallels exist between McCarthyism and Miller's depiction of the Salem witch trials. When *The Crucible* opened on Broadway on January 22, 1953, audiences were well aware of the symbolism it represented. McCarthyism took place during a period of intense suspicion in the United States primarily from 1950 to 1954, when the U.S. government was actively countering alleged American Communist Party subversion, its leadership, and others suspected of being Communists or sympathizers. During this period people from all walks of life, but especially the arts, became the subject of aggressive "witch-hunts," often based on questionable evidence. Paranoia reached a peak of hysteria.

"Conscience was no longer a private matter but one of state administration." Arthur Miller

House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC or HCUA) (1938-1975) was an investigative committee, of the United States House of Representatives. In 1969 the House changed the committee's name to the Committee on Internal Security. The House abolished the committee in 1975 and its functions were transferred to the House of Judiciary Committee.



HUAC Hearing

In 1956 Miller appeared before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. On May 31, 1957, Miller was found guilty of Contempt of Congress for refusing to reveal the names of members of a literary circle suspected of Communist affiliation. His conviction was reversed on August 7, 1958, by the U.S. Court of Appeals.

Arthur Miller: *Certain processes are universal. When Gentiles in Hitler's Germany, for example, saw their Jewish neighbors being trucked off, or soldiers in Soviet Ukraine saw the Kulaks sing before their eyes, the common reaction, even among those unsympathetic to Nazism or Communism, was quite naturally to turn away in fear of being identified with the condemned. As I learned from non-Jewish refugees, however, there was often a despairing pity mixed with 'Well, they must have done something.'*



Elia Kazan

In the film industry alone, over 300 actors, writers and directors were denied work in the U.S. through the informal Hollywood blacklist. The studios, after first resisting, agreed to submit artists' names to the House Committee for "clearing" before employing them. "This unleashed a veritable holy terror," wrote Arthur Miller. Even Miller's close friend, film director Elia Kazan, 'named names' to the HUAC, effectively ending a friendship, careers, and in some cases, lives. Miller and writer Lillian Hellman publicly denounced him.

