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## Miller's The Crucible And Mccarthyism

In Arthur Miller's book, *The Crucible*, it is a tragic story of innocent individuals who are subjected to the deceitful, prideful judges of their trial. During the 1950s in America, McCarthyism arose as the practice of making accusations without the proper regard for evidence. It later began in Salem, Massachusetts when young teenage girls were thought to be practicing witchcraft in the woods. After many denounces, it was targeted down to three guilty individuals that were suspected of doing witchcrafting and they were all hanged for being falsely accused. Arthur Miller's argument was effective by simply wanting to convey a message to warn of mass hysteria, the upcoming of McCarthyism, and the drama reflecting the culture of the 1950s.

Miller's argument provides examples of persuasive appeals and logical fallacies.

In act one, Betty Parris is lying on her bed, seemingly frightful from the previous night's events while her father is at her bedside. Previously, it is evident that Abby, Betty, and many other young girls were in the wilderness dancing, as Tituba attempted to conjure spirits. Betty's father, Reverend Parris, identified the girls dancing, a serious violation in the Salem community. Fearing the consequences, Betty fakes illness and was lying down at an unmoving, unresponsive state. Since Betty had no signs of illness, the community instantly suggested that all the girls were playing with the devil, which is a rumor of witchcraft. Rebecca Nurse is sent to the reverends' house to examine Betty Parris and when she gets there she addresses, "Pray, calm yourselves. I have eleven children and I am twenty-six times a grandma, and I have seen them all through their silly seasons, and when it come on them they will run the Devil bowlegged keeping up with their mischief. I think she'll wake when she tires of it." On the other hand, Ann Putnam was blaming Betty for being possessed by the devil. She says, "I'd not call it sick, the Devil's touch is heavier than sick, it's death, y'know, it's death drivin' into them forked and hoofed." Miller's example of pathos is identified when Ann Putnam is too emotionally involved because she had lost seven out of her eight children. Furthermore, the argument relies too heavily on emotional appeal rather than logic, because Ann Putnam was convinced that someone used witchcraft to murder her children rather than thinking it could've been from some other logical reasoning. With this example, there is a logical fallacy. Arthur Miller included hasty generalization to answer his argument on how individuals were accused of doing the witchcrafting only because other people were jumping to conclusions, like Ann Putnam.

One of the most important pieces of evidence that Arthur Miller adds in *The Crucible* is the poppet. The poppet adds context to the overall argument that Miller was trying to make about mass hysteria. In act two, Mary gives Elizabeth a poppet that she sewed together while in court with Abby. As mentioned, Mary says, "(Crossing to Elizabeth, taking a small rag doll from pocket in her undershirt.) I made a gift for you today, Goody Proctor. I had to sit long hours in a chair, and passed the time with sewing." When Mary was done sewing, she made sure that she tucked the needle back into the doll. To make the situation more complicated, Abby abruptly decided to get a needle and stab herself to draw conclusions that Elizabeth had done it, since she had the poppet. Mary Warren was then accused of being part of this crime because she made the poppet and Elizabeth was sent to jail for being falsely accused. They both were put into the accusations of the court because of Abby's lies. As Mr. Danforth says, "A poppet were

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discovered in Mister Proctor's house, stabbed by a needle. Mary Warren claims that you sat beside her in the court when she made it, and that you saw her make it, and witnessed how she herself stuck her needle into it for safe-keeping. What say you to that?" Abby responded by saying, "It is a lie, sir." The evidence that Miller presented of the poppet is convincing to the judges that Abby was stabbed in the stomach by Elizabeth. However, the only reason for this is the unjust testimony by Abby and false eyewitnesses. Due to the accusations, three main characters were scheduled to be hanged which had ended the horrific era of the Salem witch trials.

Arthur Miller's effectiveness of the argument helps the reader understand the reasoning of McCarthyism, mass hysteria, and the culture in the 1950s. His creativity and imagination effectively answer's his case overall. One of the main factors that answered his case in *The Crucible* was McCarthyism. McCarthyism was prominent in the 1950s and those who are accused were pleaded guilty, put on trial, expected to confess, and were expected to accuse others of playing with witchcraft. Moreover, Miller engages the reader when the town of Salem falls into mass hysteria, a condition in which there are threats, whether real or imaginary are put into society as a result of fear. This happened when neighbors would suddenly turn on each other and would accuse people they've known for years of practicing witchcraft and worshipping the devil. Personally, this novel made me feel the emotions of those that were brutally convicted and hatred for those that had the foolish idea of witch crafting. Millers' argument enhanced the reader's point of view of the culture and the ways of witchcraft that were prominent at the time.