
Analysis of Parallels Between the Play 'The Crucible' and McCarthyism

"You can't eat the orange and throw the peel away—a man is not a piece of fruit", was a quote by Arthur Miller based on the life.

The play 'The Crucible' was written by Arthur Miller and was originally published on the 22nd January 1953, during the same period as the ruling of Senator Joseph McCarthy also known as the Red Scare. The Crucible, a play, was about the hysteria of the Salem Witch Hunt and Trials which hanged any of the accused known to be guilty of witchcraft while the Red Scare aka McCarthyism was based on ex-senator McCarthy's unsubstantiated claims that more than 200 'card carrying' members of the Communist party had infiltrated the United States government.

McCarthyism is the practice of making accusations of treason without checking for proper evidence. Joseph McCarthy was one of the many Americans afraid of communism. McCarthy had been voted senator in 1946 after he ridiculed his opponent's failure. McCarthy then began to accuse people in state and federal governments. The Salem Witch Trials, represented in Arthur Miller's The Crucible are people being accused of witchcraft rather than communism. The parallels between The Crucible and McCarthyism are the symbolism between the characters and the context, the antagonists were only seeking attention and power.

Both 'The Crucible' and the Red Scare event has its similarities and differences. The reason behind Arthur Miller's motive on writing the play was based on the reflection of the mass cultural and political hysteria which was constructed when the U.S government sought to suppress Communism and radical leftist activity in America. This time of the Red Scare affected the playwright personally. Hysteria increases as characters falsely accuse people of witchcraft, much like the man hunt for anyone involved in the possibility of being a communist from the McCarthyism era. What can be found based on the Crucible and the McCarthyism Red Scare event is the Similarities, Differences and Themes.

As the play and the Red Scare event goes, the hysteria increases as McCarthy and the characters falsely accuse people of witchcraft. There are similarities which can be seen among this two events. Joseph McCarthy made the most of that situation. In Wheeling, West Virginia, McCarthy accused two hundred and five people of being communists in the early 1950s without proof while in the play, Abigail Williams and the girls accused a part of the townsfolk of partaking in witchcraft without proof.

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On the other hand, another similarity that can be found is that, during the McCarthyism red scare events, people who were accused were assumed to be guilty, put on trial, and expected to divulge the names of other Communist sympathizers. Failure to do so led to sanctions, those who were labeled as communists had to lose their jobs and reputation while in *The Crucible* the accused are assumed guilty, put on trial, expected to confess, and expected to accuse others of being witches.

According to both events, both parties assumed to be guilty after he or she is accused. Besides that, the hysteria increases as McCarthy and the characters falsely accuse people of witchcraft and communism. Much to similarities between the play and the red scare event, differences too can be obtained. One major differences that can be seen in the play as well as the McCarthyism red scare event is the time where the event has taken place. According to Arthur Miller, it is said that the Salem witch hunt and trials occurred between the 1600s, whereas, the Joseph McCarthy red scare event took place during the late 1940s to early 1950s, to be precise, republican ex-Senator Joseph R. McCarthy was the senator of Wisconsin State from the year 1947 up to his death in 1957. Another differences that can be seen is that, according to Arthur Miller, in the play, 'The Crucible', whomever who were who were accused in the Salem Witch Trials, denied their guilt towards partaking in witchcraft were sentenced to death by hanging, whereas, during the McCarthyism red scare event, whomever were accused of communism and infiltrating the government were not sentenced to death but those who were labeled as communists had to lose their jobs and reputation.

As McCarthy and the girls accuse people, hysteria increases in both events. A few topics and themes can be seen in these two events. One of them being, Lies and Deceit which is a major topic in both events. In the crucible, Abigail and the girls falsely accuse Goody Anne and Goody Osburn first in the McCarthy red scare event, ex-Senator Joseph McCarthy falsely accuse 205 people of being a communist and infiltrating the United States Government.

Another topic is found is, the mass Hysteria found in both events. In the crucible, mass hysteria is seen among the townsfolk, hysteria is seen in the courts irrational acceptance towards the girls claims of witchcraft, as an example, according to act III, the court of refused to believe Mary Warren's claims of accusing the witchcraft to be false, meanwhile, Abigail and the girls, accuses Mary Warren of being under the influence of witchcraft. However, in the McCarthyism red scare event, Hysteria is also seen as a major topic. Due to ex-Senator Joseph McCarthy's claims on communism the public concerns on it has heightened by international events. This event has impacted the citizens of the United States as they too have felt the effects of the Red Scare on many levels, one, being a personal level, meanwhile thousands of alleged communist sympathizers have their lives disrupted as they were hounded by law enforcements and thus, alienated by friends and family as well as to watch their careers rot. It can be seen that hysteria effects both events, while playing a big role among the mob mentality.

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According to Arthur Miller's play, the Crucible, shows that the townsfolk tried to momentarily stand up for themselves by giving a statement to which they agree that the accused are innocent by signing an affidavit, however, was not recognized nor agreed in the eyes of the court. Therefore, the townsfolk were not willing to stand up to the court for fear of being accused of being a witch. Meanwhile, during the 1950's the media were not willing to stand up to Senator McCarthy for fear of being accused of being a Communist.

In conclusion, as McCarthy and the girls accuse people, hysteria increases in both events, both the Crucible and ex-Senator McCarthy red scare event has both its similarity as well as differences, as well as topics. The relations between this two has its contrast where it correlates to each other eventually.

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