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### The Fear of the Red Witch

Society seems to have recurring problems. The Salem Witch Trials and the Red Scare were both the same idea with different problems. For Salem, the Puritans thought witches were trying to destroy their community and as for the McCarthy Trials, the public believed that the communists hiding in their society would destroy America. *The Crucible* and the McCarthy Trials both include selfish individuals who accuse others in order to save their own skin, those who were blameless were being charged as guilty which resulted in them paying their lives for it, and the atmospheric fear running through the courtroom also played its role on both. Regardless of how weak and loose in evidence there was, the idealism of both McCarthyism and that presented in *The Crucible*, were blindly followed by the paranoid population. Among the innocent, many were wrongly accused and killed. Knowing history, a similar event may repeat itself once more.

One of the main similarities between *The Crucible* and the McCarthy trials is the accusations. In both *The Crucible* and the McCarthy trials, when a person was accused of being a witch or a communist they were expected to disclose other suspects. In *The Crucible*, many

people accused others of being witches because they were afraid of being killed for not revealing other so called witches. While people that were accused of being communists during the McCarthy trials tried to get leniency by naming other communist sympathizers.

*The Crucible* and the McCarthy trials were also parallel to one another was through the motives behind people selling out other people. In both situations, the citizens tried to prosecute people that they had ulterior motives against. For example, people trying to get revenge on their neighbors, trying to take land, and simply trying to not go down themselves. Between *The Crucible* and the McCarthy trials, cases were held and immediately, the citizens that were put on trial were detained until proven guilty. Even during the McCarthy trials with the famous American saying of “innocent until proven guilty,” being broken.

Abigail and the girls and the HUAC committee are in correspondence to each other. The manner in which they pointed out who were witches and communists reflect the other. Abigail and her girls would find witches because they were the only ones that could “actually” see the witches. While the HUAC committee would accuse people of being communist with the famous line of “Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of the Communist party?”.

Another similarity that *The Crucible* and the McCarthy trials has is through the Coreys and the Rosenbergs. The Coreys were a couple that were both sentenced to death in *The Crucible* because Giles’ wife Martha was accused of witchcraft and in real life during the McCarthy trials, the Rosenbergs were both executed by electric chair for being couriers for a Soviet cable called VENONA. Giles Corey and Julius Rosenberg both defended their wives when they were accused of being accomplices with Soviets. Martha Corey was accused of witchcraft because Giles had unintentionally said that she read books that may have had to do with them. As for the

Rosenbergs, Ethel's brother David Greenglass said that she typed a few messages to the Soviets; Julius defended her, as did Giles with Martha. Both Martha and Ethel were both good people, according to not only their community, but their husbands too. Giles stayed resilient about his wife and his own innocence to the witchcraft accusations until his death; his wife died shortly after him. Julius and Ethel died on the same day and denied the accusations of being accomplices with the Soviets, even when they were both facing the electric chair. The executions and denial of the Coreys were the result of the madness that was rapidly spreading through Salem and how even the innocent would not be able to escape it. This also happened with the Rosenbergs; although Julius was later proven to be guilty. Ethel was an example of how madness caught up with the innocents of the time, which was similar to how Martha became accused of witchcraft.

Lastly, fear plays a key role; McCarthy and Reverend Parris instill fear into the lives of the community to make up for their flaws and gain control. Reverend Parris is disliked among the Puritan community mostly because he constantly preaches about damnation rather than righteous living. Parris' selfish behavior causes him to quarrel over firewood, demand golden sticks for church, and demand that the deed of the house he lives in should be handed over to him. Basically, he was afraid losing all that he has leached from the Puritan community including his social standing. In order to bring Salem back under his control, he held accusations towards the girls. Parris would tell a specific girl that if she wanted to save herself, she needed to rat someone out. Resembling Parris, Joseph McCarthy's purpose for the accusations was to boost his approval for re-election and ensure his political success because his first term proved to be unimpressive. Joseph ran as the Republican candidate for the Wisconsin Senate seat. McCarthy willingly took advantage of the nation's panic stricken dilemma against communism, claiming

he had a list around 205 people in the State Department that were known members of the American Communist Party. An uproar of discomfort had risen all throughout the American public. The need for an investigation regarding underground rebels was very high. The people on the list were in fact not all communists. Unable to acknowledge his pride, McCarthy kept investigating and when all backfired on him, it was too late to clean up his reputation. If Reverend Parris and Joseph McCarthy went against their pride and accepted that their choices were wrong, they could have kept or even gained a higher position the correct way.

The selfishness and cowardliness of people can turn a situation from bad to worse. The Salem Witch Trials and The Red Scare are a prime example of how people can destroy or end peoples lives just for their own safety. The Mccarthy Trials and *The Crucible* depict how situations can escalate out of hand if not properly handled. Many will go as far as wrongfully accusing the innocent to make themselves appear faultless. Assuredly, this will not be the last time something of this nature will happen again due to the inevitable fault in mankind. People are selfish, scared, and self centered and these events portray that. McCarthyism and *The Crucible* are different takes on the same problem. People will look out for themselves only and it will probably never change.