I. Mass Hysteria

1. Definition: society-wide emotionally unstable state brought about by fear of a perceived threat.
2. Characteristics
   1. Widespread fear
   2. Mass psychosis: anxiety, paranoia, depression.
   3. Social order riots
   4. Self-destructive behavior
   5. Influence
      1. direct: rumor, gossip, school, church, organizations
      2. indirect: mass media

II. The Great Fear

A. Where? When? What?

1. US: 1950s

2. Cold War

3. Threats:

a. nuclear war

b. communist subversion

B. Nuclear War

1. Threat:

a. nuclear war

b. arms race

c. 1945-6 by 1986-69,075

2. Fear

a. nuclear annihilation

b. “Frankenstein”

c. collective psychosis

i. nightmares

ii. anxiety

iii. depression (fatalism)

d. tranquilizers

e. move to remote areas

f. build bomb shelters: “The Shelter”

g. stock cellars and basements

3. Fear and mass media

a. Horror films

(Rodan, Beast From Twenty Thousand Phantoms, Them, Godzilla)

b. Science Fiction films

(Forbidden Planet, The Day the Earth Stood Still)

c. Television: Twilight Zone: “The Shelter,” “Time Enough to Last”

d. Science fiction: (Ray Bradbury “The Veldt”, “ There Will Come Soft Rains”)

4. Institutionalization

a. Permanent war economy

i. arms race

ii. Show trial

b. propaganda/ therapy

i. Civil Defense System: warning, shelter, drills

ii. Government sponsored films: duck and cover and Bert the Turtle

iii. Atoms for Peace

Ike speech: 1953

Traveling exhibits

nuclear power

5. Self-destructive

a. MAD

b. mining: Navajo Nation

c. production: communities

d. testing: Atomic soldiers , Radioactive Indians, Radioactive citizens

e. testing: chemical and biological 1951-1969

f. resources

g. legacy: present

C. Communists everywhere (not just spies, not just espionage)

1949 J. Howard McGrath Att. General “Communists in America are everywhere-- in factories, offices, butcher stores, on street corners, in private businesses. And each carries in himself the germ of death for society.”

1. Who?

a. subversives : destroying the American Way of Life

b. anyone and anywhere

c. frequently “homosexuals”

2. Means

a. infiltration

b. lies, deceptions, half-truths, subversive actions

3. If they are successful?

a. lose our freedoms

b. lose our individuality (everyone would be the same)

c. automatons

4. Direct influence

a. rumor, gossip

b. Church sermons: Billy Graham “moral termites from within”

c. schools

d. Red lists: DAR, League of Women Voters , American Legion, VFW

e. women’s magazines: Communism and women’s role

f. government

5. Indirect influence: mass media

a. science fiction films

They Came From Outer Space, Invaders from Mars, Invasion of the Body Snatchers

b. Anti-Communist films

I Was A Communist for the FBI, Big Jim McLain, I Married

A Communist, My Son John)

d. television: I Let Three Lives 1953-1956

e. Twilight Zone: “Monsters Are Due on Maple Street”

f. pulp fiction

i. Mickey Spillane by 1953 17 million copies

ii. Kiss Me Deadly

g. cartoons:

i. Captain America

ii. Lil Abner

9. consequences

a. new symptom: paranoia

b. fear and betrayal

c. vigilance: identify and report strange or suspicious behavior

i. reading material

ii. critical of US policy

iii. advocates of social change (civil rights leaders)

d. social order riots

e. anti-gay violence

D. Institutionalization of Fear

1. HUAC 11947

1. hearings: entertainment industry

b. ritual

c. ‘black list”

2. Truman EO9835: loyalty and security program for federal employees

a. discover disloyal Americans

b. loyalty boards, security checks, and loyalty oaths

(anonymous accusations, secret evidence, paid informers)

c. 6.6 million

3. laws

a. Internal Security Act of 1950

i. register organizations that are security threats

(

ii. sympathetic association, donations, expression)

b. Emergency Detention Act + Security Index

c. Taft-Hartley Act

4. McCarthy and McCarthyism

E. Self-destructive

1. Jobs lost, lives ruined, deaths

2. Violate fundamental values

a. freedom of speech and thought

b. freedom of association

3. Violate institutional protections

a. due process

b. guilt by association

4. Fear and Public policy

a. foreign policy

b. domestic policy: labor and civil rights (“Operation Wetback”)

1. military industrial complex