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Language Arts

9 November 2017

### The Parallels Between “The Crucible” and the Red Scare

In the time now known as the Salem Witch Trials, chaos was flooding the town of Salem, Massachusetts in the year of 1692. Those accused of witchcraft, were ordered by the court to a hanging. Much more recently, the Red Scare in the late 1940’s and early 1950’s, created major widespread panic in the United States. In “The Crucible,” a work of historical fiction written by Arthur Miller, the Salem Witch trials is depicted in a play. This begins when Betty Parris, a girl in the play, is pretending to be bewitched. She then makes others to believe that witches are present in Salem, Massachusetts, the setting of the play. Ethical principles deemed unacceptable by society contribute to conflicts as seen in “The Crucible” and the Red Scare; such parallels are displayed through acts of scapegoating, hysteria, and false accusations.

First of all, scapegoating occurs in both, “The Crucible” and The Red Scare. Scapegoating, the act of blaming others for their faults, happens under certain circumstances. As such, Mrs. Putnam concludes in “The Crucible,” “I knew it Goody Osburn were midwife to me three times. I begged you Thomas, did I not?” I begged him not to call Osburn because I feared

my babies always shriveled in her hands” (Miller 14). Mrs. Putnam refuses to accept the death of her babies as her very own fault. Instead, she chooses to blame Osburn, her midwife, for her babies’ deaths. During the Red Scare, Communism frightened the citizens of the United States. People found this to be a great opportunity to scapegoat, as they could accuse others of supporting Communism, wh

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en they really were not. To demonstrate, Oppenheimer, a man working for politics, “was used as a scapegoat, with some ‘superpatriots’ calling him a ‘hardened communist’ and a spy. In his role as a political advisor, Oppenheimer had made numerous enemies” (Rossenfeld 15). Oppenheimer had high status in society, as he worked as political advisor. People who opposed him would have blamed him for problems seen in politics. By accusing him for supporting communism ideals, he would have lost his job as well as his reputation. In summary, a variety of factors influence scapegoating in “The Crucible” and during the Red Scare.

Secondly, hysteria arises in the “Crucible” and The Red Scare. The majority of society becomes hysterical about witches in “The Crucible.” As noted when Mary Warren in “The Crucible” stutters, “I--I cannot tell how, but I did. I--I heard the other girls screaming, and you, your honor, you seemed to believe them, and if-it were only sport in the beginning sir, but then the whole world cried spirit and I promise you...” (Miller 33). Mary Warren is trying to explain to judge Danforth that the girls who testified in court, had to be faking being bewitched. When

she declares that everyone in Salem, Massachusetts believed them, it can be inferred that they became hysterical about witches in Salem. During the Red Scare, communists were perceived as having the ability to corrupt the U.S.A's government. As observed in an article by History.com, "As the cold war between the Soviet Union and the United States intensified in the late 1940's and early 1950's, hysteria over the perceived threat posed by communists in the U.S. became known as the Red Scare" (History.com Staff 1). During those years, the Cold War, in which the U.S. fought the Soviet Union, was escalating. Communism was the Soviet Union's system of government. Since the U.S. and the Soviet Union were enemies at that time, communism was feared in the United States. Americans became hysterical about communists interfering with America's government and

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wreaking havoc. In essence, hysteria is caused when society feels threatened as in "The Crucible" and the Red Scare.

Thirdly, false accusations are seen in "The Crucible" and The Red Scare. False accusations are done in "The Crucible" to avoid trouble. Feeling sheer anxiety when being questioned by Hale, Abigail moves on to blame Tituba for summoning the devil, as she declares, "I never called him! Tituba, Tituba..." (Miller 12). Tituba, a slave in "The Crucible," is falsely accused by Abigail because of her low status. Tituba, having never conjured the devil, is threatened to be hanged for witchcraft, unless she confesses. Tituba proceeds to falsely confess

to avoid being hanged. During the Red Scare, people were suspicious of each other for supporting communism. This led to numerous false accusations. As mentioned in an article by History.com, “While a small number of the accused may have been aspiring reverbnation, most others were the victims of false allegations or had done nothing more than exercise their democratic right democratic right to join a political party.” With this in mind, many of those who were falsely accused later faced problems. They would have lost their job and their friendships they had with other people. As a whole, false accusations are just one of the many parallels seen in “The Crucible” and in the Red Scare.

In conclusion, situations in which ethical views are looked down upon by society, such as communism during the Red Scare and witchcraft in “The Crucible,” have parallels that are displayed through acts of scapegoating, hysteria, and false accusations. There is great significance from learning about these parallels, as it can help us find ways to prevent scapegoating. It can also help us stop hysteria, by learning to examine a situation carefully, instead of becoming hysterical. We can increase our chances of spotting false accusations by studying events like the Red Scare. By doing so, we can stop innocent people of being charged of crimes they didn’t commit. By l

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earning about the Red Scare and “The Crucible” we can stop making the same mistakes ever again.

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