

Witch hunt expository essay



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A witch-hunt is not limited to one particular event in history. Many key events throughout time relate very closely to these acts of misunderstanding and unjustified killings. For instance, *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller was written to portray the Salem Witch Trials in a fictional view although based on true events. Miller in fact based this play after Joseph McCarthy Red scare as a fictional foreshadow to more modern times.

Another thing closely tied to the witch-hunts is the treatment of Japanese Americans after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. They were completely stripped of their humanity and marked as something to look down upon or fear. In all these cases it is begun with a simple belief that becomes too strong for one to keep in control. Most of the people in all of the situations were completely innocent but branded with a mark that cast them off as threatening to oneself and family. It marks historical repetition, as human kind is not able to let go of the past although they may or may not have lived through it.

The idea of a witch-hunt is based upon one's fear and inability to explain an abnormal occasion. The imagination runs wild and out of control twisting reality and fantasy into an indistinguishable combination. It is not even questioned because the time it seemed very logical and reasonable. The Salem Witch hunt is not the first of its kind, witchcraft has been believed to be around since about the sass in Europe. At least tens of thousands of “witches” were executed (Plumber). *The Crucible* in fact is closer to a true historical event than it seems.

The characters Arthur Miller used in the playwright actually existed, although age and relationships to one another was bit shifted. Although the truth in

the play is the reality of the trials, there was no mercy shown because no one truly knew what to believe because everything was so misunderstood. Anyone could be guilty and anyone could be accused even if his or her name was good (Miller). A “witch-hunt” very close to home, was the hunt for communists in America. Communism when it was first misused struck fear into many peoples, including Americans hearts.

The House Committee on Un-American Activities (HAUSA) with the aid of Joseph McCarthy was the key leader in the Red hunt. Anyone could simply be labeled as a communist and have all of his or her rights immediately taken away. An oddly targeted group of people during this time was actors. Being involved with the Hollywood franchise the HAUSA was very concerned with what was broadcasted and if they were posting things that were deemed an act of communism. Many actors’ names were submitted to the HAUSA for a background check to make sure that they were not in fact communist.

This resulted in a very negative reaction from these people, as there was no possible way to prove anything, only accusations that could be faulty and unjustified (Miller). Everyone in industries such as this was paranoid at the thought of working with a communist to the point that anyone accused could not even find work, reducing their social status to lower than a vermin in the street. While these people were all very similar nothing very specifically related to race came about until after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Japanese Americans, no matter if they were born in America or not, were convicted and sent off to Internment camps much like the concentration camps found during the Holocaust. They were so much alike that the US did

not consider how similar their actions were to that of the Nazi incineration camps (Life in Internment Camps). People were very prejudiced and suspicious of these people having thoughts of spies or other military based jobs. However there was little to no evidence against anyone to prove they could be up to the sort of mischief acceptable for punishment.

Though it was very easy for Americans to send these people off due to previous discrimination; the bombing only reinforced their hateful opinions and pushed them to take drastic, unnecessary measures (Paeans Internment). Whatever time period, history is deemed to repeat itself due to the simple human cause of panic and fear of one thing that is not at all threatening as deemed to be. Humans are naturally prone to letting their imaginations run wild to a point beyond reason.

The hysteria that was presented in all three cases proves that humans do not take in to account what really surrounds them, only an opinion glorified through irrational outbursts from one singular person that escalates into something way out of proportion. If one could take into consideration all of the logical components of every “witch-hunt” they would not have occurred to that great of an extent. If reason were to overcome the emotional factor many lives would have been spared and hysteria and fear would not have spread like a wildfire taking its victims one by one.