

The crucible vs. mccarthyism assignment

[History](#)



It is common knowledge that Author Miller wrote The Crucible as a reaction to a tragic time in our countries history. The McCarthy hearings, as they came to be known, which dominated our country from 1950 to 1954, where hearings in which many, suspected of being related to communism, where interviewed and forced to give up names of others, or they where imprisoned, and their names were black listed. There are several parallels between the McCarthy Era, and the time of the Salem witch trials.

One similarity one will see is what I call the scare factor. Another parallel between the two groups is the “ everybody is doing it” mentality. One also sees a parallel in the lives that were ruined in both eras because of the accusations and punishments. Both those accused in The Crucible and those accused during the McCarthy hearings were found guilty with such little evidence. One would think that such wild accusations, with so little proof, would easily be dismissed.

I believe the primary source for McCarthy and the accusers in Salem’s support comes from what I call the scare factor. Our country was going through a scary time, with the fear of the spread of communism on everybody’s mind. These rumors of communist in the state department sparked a hunt that many backed because they were scared. In Salem the children where acting unusually and everyone was scared. When a source for this problem was suggested, because of their fear, everyone was willing to support it.

Another source of support was the get on board, or everybody is doing it mentality. Because it is human nature for one to go with the flow the people

of Salem, who had religion rammed down their throats, followed their leaders, and the rest of their neighbors in the witch-hunt. Those who disagreed were considered witches. They were watching out for themselves, and because of their fear, the situation escalated and more were accused. Just as those in the story, many in our nation, and government, jumped on board and backed McCarthy.

Because of the Red Scare, everyone feared the thought of communism in our government. Just as the people of Salem folded and got on board, our country supported the McCarthy hearings. The situation escalated and became something our country would soon regret. The crucible is a pot or vessel commonly made from some sort of a highly heat-resistant material. For centuries, people have used crucibles for melting metals, such as gold or silver, to test them for purity.

The word crucible probably derives from the Latin word *crux*, meaning “cross” or “trial.” It has also become a word describing a severe test, due to the Salem Trials. The time of the Salem witch trials is deservedly referred to as a crucible. Those accused were put in a melting pot to test their purity, and they were severely tested. The innocent were punished in Salem. The same is seen in the McCarthy hearings. The innocent were considered impure, and tested. Unfairly accused their lives were ruined by the rampage that swept the nation.

One can obviously see the similarities between the McCarthy period of history and the period of time in which the Salem witch trials took place. The people were scared of something, because they were told to be scared of it.

Everyone backed the hunts and those who did not were accused. Due to this scare everyone desired to rid themselves of the impurities. The innocent were accused and put in a melting pot. Their careers, and lives were ruined. Another similarity the two periods of history have is the regret that America has when looking back on these tragic misfortunes.