

The crucible rhetorical analysis essay



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In a society where the thoughts and opinions of people are meant to blend in, a division actually occurs where they are usually separated because of their opinions. The play and the event, The Crucible and the “ Red Scare” respectively, supply greatly to the difference of opinion because it shows that people are willing to do anything to not only oust the people that they dislike, but try and obtain the attention that they are seeking. During the “ Red Scare,” McCarthy targets the issue of communism in the United States of America in order to become the favorable candidate for re-election as well as obtaining the attention that he desired.

This event parallels with Abigail Williams, from Arthur Miller’s play, The Crucible because of the fact that she basically targets people in the town of Salem in order to oust her enemies, make witchcraft more apparent, and also obtain the attention that she desires. Miller created the character of Abigail Williams to symbolize the mischievous role of McCarthy during the “ Red Scare”. The fear of what is known and what is unknown is able to be used well when it is in the hands of evil and greedy people, like Abigail and Senator McCarthy.

In the play, Abigail knows that the town of Salem has a problem with not only the devil, but the whole concept of witchcraft strikes fear into their hearts as well. As Oakley states in the essay “ The Great Fear”, Senator McCarthy “ found the issue he had been looking for” which just so happened to be about the United States learning and dealing with the threat of communism (Oakley 201). Senator McCarthy used the same logic as Abigail since he knew that the United States had a fear of communism.

During the “ Red Scare,” the citizens of the United States feared the country of Russia because of their communist government and Senator McCarthy had the chance to draw in a lot of attention. Abigail knew how to work the crowd after she was caught dancing “ for the devil” as she pointed the blame at Tituba (Miller 848). This would directly correlate to McCarthy and the “ Red Scare” as he would point the finger at many people who were holding a government office. As the investigation went on, McCarthy sat back as he gained fame and his victims suffered from his vicious lies.

Abigail and McCarthy both tried to use pre-existing fear as an exploit in order to help build their fame: Abigail wants the attention; and McCarthy, the recognition. In the play Abigail started the malevolent lie just so she could achieve one simple goal: the disposal of Elizabeth Proctor and the start of a spectacle. As the play states, “ John—I am waitin’ for you every night,” (Miller 838). Abigail obviously wants to make Elizabeth look like witch material in order to eliminate Elizabeth and grant Abigail the spotlight that she wants.

This shows that Abigail, much like McCarthy, has a motive when it comes to using fears and exploits to deceive the town of Salem. At the same time, Senator McCarthy wants to use the existence of communism in order to help build his fame so he can easily be re-elected. Williams and McCarthy both show that when there is a weakness or a fear in the system or the society; they had to get in the opportunistic strike at the perfect moment in order to get the maximum amount of attention possible. During the time of the “ Red Scare” McCarthy stated that he “ loved to manipulate people,” (Oakley 207).

He was able to “ swagger” in the meeting and he knew that he could stir up “ turmoil and confusion” at a moment’s notice. Once again the connection can be made back to Abigail as she had many of her listeners essentially under her thumb. Abigail was able to convince the listeners that Tituba made her “ drink blood,” (Miller 847). Abigail could get almost anyone in the town to listen to her talk about witchcraft just like McCarthy could get just about anyone to listen to his rambles about the Communist Party during the “ Red Scare.”

The manipulators virtually assumed the center of attention; McCarthy for his talent to pull figures and numbers into his rambles on communism and Abigail for her talent to become the ringleader of the band of girls that are “ jangling the keys to the castle,” (Miller 860). McCarthy and Abigail also had to avoid the heavy suspicion that came from their adversaries such as the Democratic Party and John Proctor respectfully. McCarthy had to start manipulating his followers’ minds by slandering the good names of the people in office and Abigail had to manipulate the girls into working with her in order to help accuse the innocent of witchcraft.

As McCarthy holds up the “ 205” names on his “ list,” a feeling of fear and a larger question about communism shrieked out among the US. The fact that communism was something to fear was always known by McCarthy and he exploited that knowledge in order to benefit himself. Abigail was crafted as a direct parallel to McCarthy in the sense of how easy it was for both of them to take control of any situation, lie, and cause other people to suffer. As Abigail and Senator McCarthy were both rather innocent before their lies

started, their mischievous and gregarious characteristics came out as they took full advantage of the fear in society.