

Similarities between the crucible and mccarthyism assignment

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In the mid uses America was plunged into a state of panic. The American Government and the American public were terrified at the prospect of communism becoming prominent in their society. From this terror the unforgiving period of America's history, which is now referred to as McCarthy, began. During this time Senator Joseph McCarthy accused numerous American citizens of being communists based on little to no evidence. If a person was suspected of even associating with communists, they were shunned from society and in many cases, incarcerated.

McCarthy destroyed the lives of thousands of potentially innocent people. Even though many were against McCarthy and his practices, they dared not to speak out for fear of being accused. The happenings in the play *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller were eerily reminiscent of those during the period of McCarthy. In *The Crucible* the town of Salem became ruled by fear during 1692, when the possibility that witchcraft had occurred was discovered. It quickly became a case of blame or be blamed with a group of teenage girls, led by Abigail Williams, accusing every person who spoke out against them.

This play was written during the time of McCarthy and it, along with George Clooney 2005 film *Good Night and Good Luck*. Explore the similarities between the actual events and their fictional counterparts. At first glance Senator McCarthy and Abigail Williams, the antagonists during McCarthy and throughout *The Crucible* respectfully, seem very different, however, their actions and mannerisms are mirrored in many aspects. In both cases the antagonists influence their trials greatly. McCarthy went so far as to run the trials while Abigail manipulated the judge to ensure her triumph.

Those who did not agree with their practices or who openly spoke against them were immediately accused or declared guilty of the crime, whether it was witchcraft or communist activity. Both McCarthy and Ballard can be observed withholding or creating evidence to suit their goals. In one instance Senator Joseph McCarthy kept evidence supplied in a trial in a secret envelope. The accused, Mill Radicchio, was not allowed to see the evidence and neither was his lawyer. Yet he was still found guilty. Ballard Williwaw's accusations were also made with little to no evidence.

When she accused Elizabeth Protector of witchcraft she had no proof, certainly nothing concrete. Abigail simply declared that Elizabeth had sent her spirit on her. She then stabbed herself in a further bid for support. It can also be observed that when the accusations began in both the cases of McCarthy and Abigail, they targeted those citizens of lower class and social standing. McCarthy targets Annie Lee Moss. An African American woman who had been working as a communications clerk in the US Army Signal Corps in the Pentagon. In *Good Night and Good Luck* Edward R.

Morrow addresses McCarthy tactics stating, " There are three Annie Lee Moss' in the phenomenon and yet only one of them is black. " Abigail Williams first names Tuba, Sarah Good and Goody Osborne. Three characters who are seen as lower class citizens by their fellow people. Both antagonists exploited the situation to tear established in boot 1 Co's America tear to communism and Sale's fear of witchcraft. While McCarthy used this fear to gain power and manipulate others into sharing his ideals, Abigail took it further and also used it for her own personal gain and later for revenge.

The power they had gained prevented others from speaking out against them in fear of their own lives. However, there were instances in which other powerful people spoke out against them and these instances led to the downfall of both McCarthy and Abigail. Although both suffered a downfall and were reduced to much lesser stance, neither of them received any form of punishment for their actions. After being questioned about the false accusations and deplorable tactics by the senate, McCarthy was merely moved to the back bench.

He received no Jail time and although he became an alcoholic, did to suffer nearly as much as the people he accused did. On the other hand, Abigail was able to flee from Salem and become a prostitute in Boston but was never sought after. It can be observed after delving into both McCarthy and Abigail characters, that though they had some minor differences they were remarkably similar for being from such different periods of America's history. The goals of the protagonists of *The Crucible* and *Good Night, and Good Luck* were nearly identical in every way.

Both John Proctor and Edward R. Morrow were respected and greatly influential members of their respectful societies. Proctor was regarded by the people of Salem as an honest, hard-working, family man. Edward R. Morrow was an established, likeable, Journalist who was able to influence the media greatly. Morrow used his television program, " See It NOW", to draw the publics attention to the extreme wrongness of McCarthy trials. Morrow wished to expose McCarthy accusations as fraudulent and save innocent people from the loss of their livelihoods.

Similarly, John Proctor wanted to expose Abigail Williams for the fraud she was and save innocent people from being killed as a result of their apparent lilt, particularly his wife. Although his involvement with Abigail was much more personal than that of Edward R. Morrows with McCarthy, he was working towards the same end goal of stopping the trials. Both men knew that upon calling for McCarthy and Abigail accusations to be examined, they themselves would suffer greatly. And they did. Morrow and his crew are accused of communist activity by McCarthy himself, though there was no evidence presented against them.

Upon Proctor accusing Abigail of falsely condemning people as witches, he himself was accused of sing witchcraft. Abigail and the other girls supported this accusation by pretending that Proctor was harming them using his supposed abilities. Even though both characters achieve their goals and stop the antagonists, it is not without cost to themselves. Proctor makes the ultimate sacrifice for the cause, in his death which ended the witchcraft trials and their subsequent hangings. Morrow suffered too, although on a much smaller scale as he lost his television show and was made to be part of another that he despised.

It is clearly shown that both protagonists achieved heir similar goals, regardless of the extreme differences in consequences. Throughout The Crucible and Good Night, and Good Luck it can be observed that the majority of the unnamed public did not agree with the ideals of the antagonists. These people seemed to wish tort the same end to the trials as the protagonists, though many of them did not speak publicly. In The Crucible,

upon Rebecca Nurse being accused of witchcraft Proctor presented the court
“... A sort of a testament.

The people signing it declared their good opinion of Rebecca... They were all members of the church [who had] never seen [any] sign [she] had dealings with the Devil,” which shows that even though 91 people were prepared to help Rebecca Nurse, they did not do so without prompting. This representation of the general public's view was much more subtle in Good Night, and Good Luck. After the episode of Morrow's show in which he expressed his controversial views on McCarthy and the phones began ringing wildly, it was found that there was a 15 to 1 approval rating of what Morrow was doing.

The major difference in the actions of the public in the two periods of time is that people in Salem allowed their names to be associated with the accused, Rebecca Nurse, by signing a testament to her character. While those in the era of McCarthy were too fearful of the likelihood that they would be accused and their livelihood ruined, to associate their names with those like Morrow. It is evident that in both eras of America's history the views of the general public were aligned with the protagonists rather than the antagonists but they were too fearful to express their views publicly.

Upon analyzing Arthur Miller's play The Crucible and George Clooney movie Good Night, and Good Luck, Senator Joseph McCarthy's hunt for communists in 1950's America can be observed as being deeply reminiscent of the Salem witch trials that were held nearly three centuries previously. Throughout this paper the truly remarkable similarities between not only the antagonists of
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these eras and their fictional counterparts, but the protagonists and the general public, were discussed. It was found that there were only a few differences between the people and their actions in both time periods and many of these were quite inconsequential in the end.