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Witch-hunt as a Model: The Juxtaposition of the Red Scare (1948-1957) and the Salem Witch Trials (1692)

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Dedication

The following effort is dedicated to the strongest pillar of my life— my father— and to my lovely mother and three beautiful sisters Amal, Ansar, and Amira.

Acknowledgements

I express my special appreciation for Mrs. Boumous for her incredible guidance and persistent patience. Also, an intensive gratitude to Miss Mouissa for taking the time to co-supervise my dissertation despite her full schedule. I further extend my gratification to all my respected teachers for providing an incredible educational experience throughout my five-year journey.

Abstract

Western history is rich with instances of witch-hunts that vary in terms of causes and purposes, yet similar in the manner of conduct. The following dissertation aims at categorizing the Red Scare (1948-1957) as a model of witch-hunt by comparing it to the Salem Witch Trials (1692). It seeks to define the model, using Douglas Walton's description of witch-hunting parameters. In achieving so, the dissertation follows a qualitative approach and a comparative analysis. The research paper introduces witch-hunting parameters and their sociopolitical contextualization within the first chapter. Then, it describes the Salem Witch Trials and the Red Scare in the second chapter to, ultimately, compare and analyze the two elements in the last chapter. After the analogy of the two historical events and the projection of their resemblance, the study concludes the categorization of the Red Scare as a witch-hunting model.

Resumé

L'histoire occidentale est riche en exemples de chasses aux sorcières qui varient en termes de causes et d'objectifs, mais similaires dans la manière de se conduire. La thèse suivante vise à classer la Peur Rouge (1948-1957) comme un modèle de chasse aux sorcières en la comparant aux les Procès des Sorcière de Salem (1692). Il cherche à définir le modèle, en utilisant la description de Douglas Walton des caractéristiques de la chasse aux sorcières. Pour y parvenir, la thèse suit une approche qualitative et une analyse comparative. Le document de recherche présente les caractéristiques de la chasse aux sorcières et leur contextualisation sociopolitique dans le premier chapitre. Ensuite, il décrit les Procès des Sorcières de Salem et la Peur Rouge dans le deuxième chapitre pour, finalement, comparer et analyser les deux éléments dans le dernier chapitre. Après l'analogie des deux événements historiques et la projection de leur ressemblance, l'étude conclut la catégorisation de la Red Scare comme modèle de chasse aux sorcières.

ملخص

التاريخ الغربي مليء بحالات صيد السحرة التي تختلف من حيث الأسباب والأهداف لكنها تتشارك نمط التنفيذ. تهدف المذكرة الآتية إلى تصنيف «الذعر الأحمر 1948-1957» كنموذج لصيد السحرة عن طريق مقارنته بـ «محاكمات سحرة مدينة سايلم 1692» تسعى المذكرة إلى تعريف هذا النموذج بالاستعانة بوصف «دوغلاس والتون» لخصائص صيد السحرة. تتخذ المذكرة نهجا نوعيا ومقارنة تحليلية من أجل تحقيق هذا المسعى. يبدأ البحث بتقديم خصائص صيد السحرة بالإضافة إلى سياقه الاجتماعي والسياسي في أول فصل، ثم يقوم بوصف واقعتي «الذعر الأحمر» و«محاكمات سحرة مدينة سايلم» وصولا إلى مقارنة وتحليل الحدثين في آخر فصل. تستنتج الدراسة بعد المقارنة التحليلية وإظهار التشابه بين الحدثين التاريخيين أن «الذعر الأحمر» يصنف كنموذج لصيد السحرة.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Witch-hunting is a phenomenon that has existed since the biblical age. The hunt essentially targeted any individual who practiced witchcraft since it was a religious crime. Nevertheless, in the 20th century, the concept of witch-hunting encircled any persecution that is conducted based on religion, ethnicity, or ideology.

Witch-hunting had been studied numerously throughout time in order to dissect its course of action. Some intellectuals such as the Rationalists, Romantics, and social scientists took different approaches in analyzing the underlying causes of witch persecutions. The Rationalists perceive witch-hunting as a tool used to achieve hidden agendas as opposed to the Romantics who believe in the actuality of witchcraft and attribute its emergence to Christian dissension and opposition. Social scientists, on the other hand, focus on the social changes that affected communities and led to the rise of witch-hunts (Fudge 490).

The most notorious historical witch persecution is the Salem Witch Trials of 1692. It occurred in Salem Village, Massachusetts Bay Colony when young girls showed weird physical and behavioral symptoms that were thought to be witchcraft afflictions. The girls' witches' allegations developed into witch trials throughout the year of 1692 and the beginning of 1693. In 1692, Massachusetts was offered a new charter that rebuked English legislation, but the colony had yet to establish its laws. This political and legal uncertainty was a prelude to the mishandling of the hysteria that same year. Furthermore, the colony was affected by the First and Second Indian Wars that erupted near its border. Some refugees escaped the conflict and settled in Massachusetts. Salem Village also endured an internal conflict because of the question of affiliation to Salem Town that was dominated mainly by merchants. These distresses eventually amplified to the witch hysteria that followed in 1692. In the same fashion, social and political tension with the Soviet Union after the end of World War II amounted to the rise of the Red Scare in the period of 1948-1957. The scare was the shared fearful sentiment towards all radical ideologies especially communism that spread in America in the 20th century.

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The Soviets' aim at expanding their Communist ideology in the world, rose the fear of radicalism in the United States. Americans worried about the possible Communist threat that could overthrow their government and radicalized all aspects of American life. This sentiment led to the emergence of investigation committees that targeted Communists in different sectors. Most prominently was the period of McCarthyism during which Senator Joseph McCarthy launched his hunt for Communists and their sympathizers. The latter was a controversial period as its allegations reached the US government, the president's administration, the State Department, and the US Army. By studying the previous events, the present dissertation focuses on the Red Scare as a representation of a witch-hunting model by comparing it to the Salem Witch Trials.

The dissertation's main objective is to highlight the categorization of the Red Scare as a modern witch-hunt that is focused on prosecuting Communists. It further aims at illustrating the many parallels that the Salem Witch Trials and the Red Scare share despite their three-centuries gap. It also seeks to construct the distinct pattern of witch-hunting.

This research paper's fundamental concern is to answer the following question: does the Red Scare fit the model of witch-hunting? Through fulfilling this inquiry, other sub-questions require examination as well:

- What does the notion of witch-hunting mean in modern settings?
- What are the parameters that determine a witch-hunt model?
- Does the Red Scare carry a resemblance to the Salem Witch Trials of 1692?

In an effort to answer the previous questions, the research paper proposes the subsequent hypotheses:

- The Red Scare is a model of witch-hunting.

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- Witch-hunting is characterized by accusations and stigmatization, mass hysteria, questionable evidence, and fake trials.
- The Red Scare (1948-1957) and the Salem Witch Trials (1692) share several similarities regarding their emergence, accusations, process of trials, violation of human rights, public hysteria, and decline.

The Red Scare had oftentimes been associated with the Salem Witch Trials as the two involve a large-scale prosecution. Many scholars who dealt with the subject of the Red Scare, specifically the era of McCarthyism, had attributed the latter to the seventeenth-century Salem's witch hysteria. Each of the following works had approached the subject from different angles. The famous play "The Crucible" (1953) was Arthur Miller's analogy of the Communist hunt of the 1950s. Miller was submitted to testify in front of the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1956, during which he confessed to his old relations with Socialists; however, he refused to name any Communists (Bloom 10-11). Miller took a literary approach to address the issue of the Red Scare through writing "The Crucible". The four-acts play was a commentary on the spread of public hysteria and governmental control during the Red Scare. Miller expressed his disapproval through the use of the Salem Witch Trials as a metaphor with a mild adjustment to the storyline. Andreanna Hughes, on the other hand, took a historical approach in comparing the two hysterias. In her thesis "Scapegoat Hysteria: A Comparison of the Salem Witch Trials and the Red Scare" (2016), Hughes focuses mainly on the accused as being scapegoats. She compares and contrasts the accused from The Red Scare and the Salem Witch Trials. She also notes how this scapegoating is a result of the need to blame a particular group of people for social and political distress. From a different perspective, Cierra Wallis highlights how the leading figures in the Salem Witch Trials, McCarthyism, and the Japanese Internment, blamed the minority for the spread of the hysteria. In her research paper "Homeland Security: The Modern Day Red Scare Perceptions of Modern Islam in American

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Society” (2010), Wallis discusses how the government uses the blame to deal with social disputes and as a way to exert control over the people. She then explains how this aspect of history continues today in depicting Muslims as terrorists with the government’s part in labeling them as a national enemy.

Despite referring the Red Scare to the Salem Witch Trials, the aforementioned works lack the detailed analogy of the two events. The two historical occurrences share various components that should be examined, such as trials, evidence, testimonies, accusations, and defamation. Hence, the following dissertation will divulge further in juxtaposing and analyzing the previous notions to examine the existence of witch-hunting pattern in the twentieth-century Red Scare.

The conducting of this study provides a better understanding of witch prosecutions in broader contexts. It is important to bring focus and reveal the historical reoccurrence of a controversial instance of American history despite an extended time. It is also crucial to shed light on authoritarian mishandlings during times of social pressure.

In order to address the aforesaid questions, the study undertakes a historical descriptive approach. It describes the phenomenon of witch-hunting with its parameters and recounts a brief history of witch-hunting in early modern Europe and New England. It also provides a historical background of the Red Scare and the Salem Witch Trials. Additionally, it follows a qualitative approach that applies a comparative analysis in the sense that it juxtaposes the two events and analyzes their similar key points.

The dissertation is divided into three chapters, each assigned to a particular purpose. The first chapter deals with the historical trace of witch-hunting in Europe and America. Besides, it supplies the connotation of witch persecution along providing modern examples of the Holocaust (1938-1945) and the Srebrenica Massacre in 1995. The chapter, then, lists and

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defines witch-hunt parameters. Finally, it concludes with a sociopolitical contextualization of the phenomenon. The second chapter gives a historical background of the events in question. It starts with revisiting Salem Village during the outbreak of its hysteria in 1692 and describes the trials that corresponded with the hunt. Later on, the chapter shifts to the Red Scare (1948-1957) and recites the event starting with its political and social context. Then it moves to the investigation committees focusing on the House Un-American Activities Committee and McCarthy's Senate Committee on Government Operations and its Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. The last chapter is an analogy of the previous chapter's elements. The comparison focuses on their similarities in trials, examination of evidence, reliance on witness testimonies, and the public hysteria.

Chapter One

The Concept of Witch-hunt and its Sociopolitical Contextualization

Introduction

The concept of witch-hunting has existed many centuries ago. Women and men across Europe and America were accused and tried on the basis of witchcraft. An occurrence that is characterized by prominent parameters, which set the stage for persecutions. Additionally, witch-hunting is a conduct that was initially influenced by religion; however, the concept carries another meaning that describes other prosecutions. This chapter discusses the history of witch-hunt and traces back its early beginnings. It further introduces the parameters of witch trials and investigates the phenomenon within its sociopolitical context.

I. The Concept of Witch-Hunting

Conceptually, witches are the evil old women who fly on a broom and wave a magic wand. Yet, in reality, witches are ordinary people who practice witchcraft. The concept of witches differs from one civilization to another. Some cultures view witches as beautiful and enchanting creatures that possess the magic of a goddess. For example, in the *Odyssey*, Homer describes the witch Circe as a “goddess with lovely hair... radiant... the beautiful goddess singing in a lovely voice” (Buckland 02). Homer’s description illustrates the Greek’s conception of some witches as charming sirens. Other cultures, however, perceive witches as the worst kind of human beings. They are evil, vile, and destructive; they bring nothing but misfortune and bad health. It is the latter kind who is the main target of witch-hunting. The term itself entails the meaning of identifying witches and bringing them to God’s justice. For Christian communities, witches are sentenced to death by the Holy Bible that condemns them in several verses among which, in King James Version, “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live” (Exod. 22.18). This verse directly penalizes them with demise regarding the vile sin they have committed. Besides, those who practiced witchcraft are God’s enemies and servants of the devil.

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I.1. Witchcraft

Before studying the process of witch-hunting, the crime itself should be understood. Brian Levack defines witchcraft as, “the practice of harmful, black or maleficent magic, the performance of harmful deeds by means of some sort of extraordinary, mysterious, occult, preternatural or supernatural power” (04). Levack’s definition is an accurate description of the image that corresponds to witches in early ages, and perceived by witch-believing societies in this modern time. The evil magic itself was known as *maleficia*, some of its afflictions included, killing people, casting disease spells on children, corrupting crops, and other forms of malevolent activities. The ones who performed such rituals were known as *malefici* and *maleficae*, Latin words that refer to male and female witches (Levack 04). It is a worldwide view that witches are vicious and their magic is atrocious. Throughout history, witches were known to only cause bad luck and illnesses. The act of witchcraft was a religious crime punishable by death; therefore, trials were conducted to determine the guilt and the sentence.

II. Witch-Hunting in Early Modern Europe

Approximately around the period between 1450 until 1750, a large number of people—the majority being women— were tried for witchcraft across Europe. Half of whom were executed mostly by burning. The trials were held at Church courts due to the significance of religion at that time. After the mid-sixteenth century, the tribunals shifted to secular courts. Witches were prosecuted in different parts of the continent in large numbers. The fear of witchcraft was evident in the manner of their prosecution. The trials were based on verbal accusations, rumors, and suspicion that led to investigations. During these questionings, the accused were pressured by force to confess and name other witches (Levack 01-02).

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II.1. Waves of Witch-Hunting

The rate of European witch-hunt differs from one period to another. For instance, from 1420 to 1520, the trials augmented and it was the time that European witch-hunt really began. Later, between 1520 and 1560, the prosecutions decreased and even subsided in some areas because of few reasons. To mention a few, there was a growing skeptical mentality amidst the cultivated mass. Also, another reason is the rise of the English reformation that led to quarrels between Catholics and Protestants. They were more focused on demonizing and rebuking each other than prosecuting witches. The Renaissance¹ also added to the decreasing rate of witch-hunting because of new Humanist ideas. These novel thoughts criticized the concept of witchcraft and, by extension, attacked its prosecutions. However, in the period between 1560 and 1630, the hunt re-intensified more than previous eras, mostly across western and central Europe. The resurgence of witch-hunt was a result of the many publications written about witchcraft by prominent figures like King James VI of Scotland. These works were a moving force to the intellectual class that once again supported witch prosecutions. Despite the growing statistics of victims during these times, it is difficult to determine the exact number of the people who were tried and executed for witchcraft in early modern European history. That is due to the loss of the majority of the trials' historical records (Levack 205-207).

III. Witch-Hunting in New England

The European witch-hunt is larger than that of New England due to the recency of its history. Massachusetts Bay Colony and Connecticut were the main settlements that witnessed many cases of witch prosecutions. The most notorious hunt is the Salem Witch Trials of 1692. The English colonies applied the English law in their legal handlings. Thus, both Massachusetts

¹ The Renaissance is a golden European period from the 14th century until the 17th century that rose after the Dark Ages with new intellectual, artistic, scientific, economic, and political rediscoveries (History.com Editors).

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and Connecticut issued the law of execution for witchcraft in 1641 and 1642. The first New England trial and execution took place in Connecticut in 1647; the convict was a woman named Alice Young. The Puritans believed that witches had special marks which they used as evidence against the accused in trials. It was thought that the mark revealed the witch's nature. Unlike European witch executions, New England executed witches through hanging. (Burns 209-211).

IV. Connotation of Witch-Hunting

the term “witch-hunt” has a deeper connotation beyond its surface. It was coined in the 20th century, referring to legal crusades against individuals or groups of people who adopt and share controversial thinking that is considered threatening or unacceptable in a certain society, whether it was political, religious, or social, and merely based on accusations.² The concept is fit to describe many persecutions in history. To name a few, Bosnian Muslims were persecuted during the Bosnian War (1992-1995). As a part of an ethnic cleansing process, the Serbian Army killed 7000 Bosniak (Bosnian Muslims), in the Srebrenica Massacre. 20000 others were also exiled from their homes in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Smith). Another notorious witch-hunt in the history of mankind is the German Holocaust of the Jews (1941-1945). This six-million-victims genocide was supported by the state under the dictatorship of Adolf Hitler (Berenbaum, Holocaust). These two examples represent a manifestation of a witch-hunting model that targets people on the basis of ideology, political affiliation, and ethnicity.

V. Parameters of Witch-hunting

When dealing with the notion of witch-hunting, there are some key features that characterize the process. Douglas Walton frames the concept within some prominent parameters that shaped it throughout history. He considers these elements as identifying factors

² Levack borrows the definition from Christina Lerner's book, *Witchcraft and Religion: The Politics of Popular Belief*, published by Oxford in 1984 (25).

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of the phenomenon. He argues that the mere existence of a number of these characteristics is enough to indicate a witch-hunt (390).

V.1. Stigmatizing the Accused

Destroying one's reputation through accusations and defamation is significantly present in witch-hunts. This feature is otherwise known as stigmatization. Walton labels these features as "demonization." The suspect is demonized by being described as a malicious deceiver whose words should not be trusted (395). This tactic is referred to as *argumentum ad hominin*³. In her book, *A Practical Study of Argument* (2009), Govier explains the tactic as the attack on the opponent's personality rather than the arguments they are presenting (157). The claims ruin the suspects' reputation by accusing them of committing a crime that is shameful and awful in the eyes of the public. Therefore, for people to be labeled as witches in times when religion was the central pillar of life is the ultimate stigma. As a result, no matter what argument the suspects use to defend themselves, their attempts will be disbelieved and disregarded (Walton 395).

V.2. Public Hysteria

Public fear and anxiety are predominant emotions within witch prosecutions. In times of witchcraft hysteria, the randomness of the accusations installed fear in people. The allegations bore no criteria; anyone and everyone were subject to suspicion. This fact produced what Walton describes as a "climate of fear." This element of fear was a massive moving force of witch-hunting. It created a sense of mass hysteria that spread among people (Walton 396-397). The rising fear of people and their constant concern led to the rise of chaos in the community. It heightened the speed of the trials and caused mishandlings of the process. The element of hysteria works in favor of the accusers since it strengthens their claims. Fear gives

³ *argumentum ad hominin* is an argument that is directed against the person. "*ad hominin*" in Latin means "against man"; by using this argument, the person is personally attacked rather than the claims he expressed (Govier 157).

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birth to paranoia, and the latter questions the truth of everything. Therefore, if the accused party attempt to defend their part, the audience would not believe their claim.

V.3. An Appearance of a Fair Trial

Witch-hunting contains a series of legal tribunals that prosecute the accused. The trials are characterized by their fakeness, meaning they do not follow the pattern of a fair trial (Walton 397). For instance, witchcraft prosecutions did not have a defense system for the suspect. As beforementioned, the accused could not defend themselves because the allegations participate in discrediting them. Additionally, it would appear that evidence is gathered for analysis by an unbiased figure. Generally, the judgement is only passed after a thorough analysis of the evidence. In witch prosecutions, however, the judge or the jury already decides the condemnation of the suspect without the examination of evidence. The aim of the trial, thus, becomes a confirmation of the accused's guilt and seeking their incrimination (398, 401).

V.4. Manipulation of Evidence

Evidence is a vital part of any trial because it is one of the basic elements upon which a correct process is conducted. However, what characterizes witch-hunt evidence is that it is not truly certifiable. The most common type of evidence in these tribunals is witnesses testimonies. These testimonies are neither confirmable nor refutable. Many cases have been built upon stories told by people on the witness stand. Those stories particularly solidify witch prosecutions. However, people's statements are subject to bias and often times are expressed with a certain prejudiced conviction. Furthermore, spectral evidence is another type of proof used in these prosecutions. During witchcraft trials, accusers claimed the vision of spirits and ghosts. These apparitions were treated as reliable proofs in court hearings. As a result, many suspects were victims incriminated. The inability to view these specters by some people did not undermine the credibility of the evidence. It only meant that the defendants were unable to

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defend themselves against the claims; hence, proving their guilt even more. When the evidence could not be verified true or false, the trials would be based on the words of the accused versus the accuser and which one does the audience believe. Yet, both testaments are prone to subjectivity. To conclude, the uncertainty of evidence and the inability to neither confirm nor deny distinguishes witch tribunals from other legal courts. Normally, evidence should be proven to be reliable and certifiable in order to use it in court. Nonetheless, witch prosecutions loosely proved for the credibility of proofs (Walton 399-400).

V.5. The Tone of Questions

Witch-hunt interrogations are characterized by a specific tone of questioning. This type of interrogation is known as, "the loaded question technique." These questions carry an underlying accusative tone. The loaded question technique shows the preconception of the defendant's guilt and the expectancy of a certain incriminating answer. This technique is smart for usage when the suspect is indeed guilty because it entraps the litigant (Walton 403). For instance, in his book *Informal Logic: A Pragmatic Approach (2008)*, Walton gives an example of this type of questioning that explains its suggestive nature, "Have you stopped abusing your spouse?" and "Have you always been a liar, or are you just starting now?" (40). Both questions hold the inclination that the suspect is already guilty of the crime. Whether the answer is negative or positive, it would only serve as a confirmation of the accusations.

VI. Sociopolitical Contextualization of Witch-hunting

Contextualization of historical events conduce a better understanding of any specific course of action. Conclusions become easy to deduce through the study of all the different aspects of a given subject. This point clarifies the causality of history and exposes the underlying factors to the emergence of events. Contextualization reveals more details beyond

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the first observation and unravels the interconnectedness of historical elements. This factor draws a close comprehension of witch-hunting and its emergence.

Witch-hunting is affected by different components that include social and political aspects. Many historians and scholars have studied witchcraft and their trials through different approaches such as anthropology, sociology, theology, psychology, and folklore studies (Fudge 489). Still, one single approach is not sufficient to study the phenomenon, as it undoubtedly encompasses several facets. Perhaps, the best way to study witch-hunting is to closely investigate the dynamics of the community members within their sociopolitical sphere. The analysis of these aspects casts an enlightening perception of the reason behind witch-hunts.

On the one hand, some external elements such as nature and disease could have instigated witchcraft prosecutions that occurred in Europe and America. Several witch-hunts happened during a period of cold weather that is known as the “Little Ice Age”. This term was coined by F.E. Matthes in 1939. However, the time range of the period is still not fixed. It is appraised to have started from the 14th century until the 19th century, or from the 15th century until the 18th century. Yet, this long period of cold had been disrupted by warmer seasons. Persecution of people for supposedly influencing the weather emerged around the 14th century. The appearance of thunderstorms, hailstorms, and heavy snowfall all led to an inhospitable farming environment and corruption of crops. Small villages demanded legal actions towards the witches who allegedly caused these poor conditions. For instance, within the span of a year, 63 women were burned for witchcraft in a small German village (Behringer 336-338). Additionally, the spread of epidemics like the plague and cholera strongly harmed the Europeans during the 14th century (Ben-Yehuda 13). As there were no explanations to these misfortunes, witches were the ones to blame. They were believed to be responsible for bad luck and illnesses because of their harmful and evil magic.

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On the other hand, despite ancient societies' attribution of witch-hunting to witchcraft, magic, superstition, and myth, modern witch persecutions are provoked by a wider set of causes that transcends these obvious notions. These hunts tend to happen in a setting where social and political powers are able to influence the legal system in a given community. This pressure can play a major factor in determining the guilt of suspects. When reviewing some models of witch-hunt in history, this feature is heavily present in relation to justifying the persecution of a certain group. In addition to that, the sociopolitical pressure molds public opinion. The public is easily swayed into whatever frame of thinking that the leading mass wants them to think (Walton 394). These political and social forces act like pressure groups who alter the events of the trials according to their favor.

VI.1. Social Contextualization

Witch-hunts surfaced because of the genuine belief in witchcraft and the existence of witches as Satan's servants. The Christians preached the severity of witchcraft as a crime and the impending punishment for those who dare to commit it. The preaching always exposed the fatal destiny of witches, which was unquestionably death (Pavlac 04). Despite these initial beliefs, both old and modern witch-hunts are shaped by social outlines that affected their emergence one way or another. As mentioned before, social pressure is an instigating force in witch persecutions due to the impact it has on the legal system. There is a variety of social causes that could have led to witch-hunting, such as family feuds. In England, specifically in the Pendle Forest of Lancashire, there was a witch-hunt that was caused by family rivalry. The family leaders were old women known as Old Demike and Old Chattox. The accusations started by the Old Demike's family who accused Old Chattox of bewitching the former's husband. Yet, both women with other female relatives were all arrested for witchcraft because they were infamous for their use of spells (Pavlac 01). Another plausible cause for witch-hunt is the conflicts within communities such as class division. Typical suspects of witchcraft were

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individuals of the lower social hierarchy. In contrast, the ones who commanded the hunts and controlled its proceedings were the higher class of elites. These rich people were nearly immune to the accusations due to their status as opposed to the poor.

Women had a large part in witch-hunt history as they were the most accused gender. Still, this fact seems to be overlooked by some historians who do not form a relationship between women and the frequency of witchcraft accusations. Anne Llewellyn Barstow wrote an article entitled, "On Studying Witchcraft as Women's History: A Historiography of the European Witch Persecutions" (1988). In this article, she focuses on women's relationship to witchcraft accusations. She further explains how their involvement in trials could be a result of men's misogyny towards females at the time. Barstow indicates that approximately more than 80% of witch-hunt victims were women. They were the main target of witchcraft accusations, especially widows and beggars. She further explains how centuries ago women, were perceived as lesser than men in all aspects of life. They were expelled from court because they were considered as minors yet prosecuted as adults when they were accused of witchcraft. Following that, women were held responsible for several misfortunes such as infertility, miscarriages, and men's objectification towards them. In the same light, she adds that women who practiced as midwives and healers stirred a sense of rivalry against male doctors and priests (07-08). Women were easy targets and perfect candidates for witchcraft since their social status was not powerful and influential in ancient societies. They served as convenient vessels for taking responsibility for actions over which people had no control.

From a different angle, witch-hunts could have also been kindled as a result of ethnic differences within a single community. The prosecution of the Cathars and Waldensians serves as an example of this type of persecution. In Medieval Europe, the Church held an immense control over its subjects. It was able to allow prosecutions and ensure its proper application. Hence, they persecuted what they thought to be a threat to the sanctity of the Church. The

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Cathars and Waldensians were groups of heretics who had their own religious beliefs and practices. The Church opposed them and persecuted them to change their beliefs. Prosecutors gathered evidence, interrogated suspects, and extracted confessions, sometimes under torture, against these groups of people. If some did not conform to Christianity, they were executed by burning like witches (Goodare 34-35). Furthermore, ethnic hostility is also another cause for the persecution of the Jews during the 20th century by the Nazi-Germans. The Nazis, under the command of Adolf Hitler, were adherents to the anti-Semitism ideology. The ideology refuted the Jews as both a religious and an ethnic group (Berenbaum, Anti-Semitism). This belief existed centuries ago, but until 1938 it never progressed into murder. When Hitler seized power over Germany in 1933, his party began the limitation of Jewish existence in different aspects like government, business, and education. The Nazis burned all works that oppose their ideology and do not complement the Aryan race, which they believed to be the superior race. These measures later escalated into the mass murder of the Jews, exactly as the German poet Heinrich Heine predicted a century prior, “Where one burns books, one will, in the end, burn people” (Berenbaum, The Holocaust). These elements of misogyny, conflicts, ethnic hostility are a personification of the social contextualization of witch-hunting in history.

VI.2. Political Contextualization

Political contextualization is yet another prominent factor in the process of witch-hunting. Witch-hunt episodes throughout history were supported by a group of elites who controlled nearly every aspect of their communities' life. Most times, the trials were headed by powerful figures who had an impact on the process. Centuries ago, the state and the church were interconnected. The state abided by the church's rules and teachings. This interconnectedness affected the emergence of witch prosecutions. The elite uses the state as a device to exert power over the mass. This fact enables them to spread and ensure their subjective gains and equally oppress the lower class. Religious sects also encouraged the state

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policies to promote their ideologies and endorse their clergymen who belonged to the elite. Additionally, the Church's support for witch-hunts is another way to eliminate any opposition and maintain the supremacy of Christianity (Barry and Davies 109). As an example, the persecution of ethnic groups who did not conform to the Church's teachings took affect with the support of state administrators. In the same fashion, modern witch-hunts were reinforced by political accordance. For instance, McCarthy's persecution of Communists during the 20th century was supported by the government. At the time, communism was regarded as the enemy of the state and any suspicion of radicalism was met by legal actions. During the period from 1917 until 1920, Communists were hunted across the United States. There were committees and raids conducted by the authorities to expose the radical threat. This hunt led to the deportation of several foreigners based on subversion (Michaels 58). These prosecutions were upheld by the government to remove all possible threats. Similarly, America continued with the same method after the end of the Second World War in 1945. The national hunt for Communists continued onward with the creation of new committees dedicated to this purpose. The political support of witch-hunts facilitated the process and put the power of the state in the prosecutors' disposal. Because of this, the persecutions of these particular groups were conducted smoothly.

Conclusion

Witch-hunting connotes beyond magic and demons. In reality, it represents the numerous persecutions that occurred throughout history. The concept is highlighted by several elements like stigmatization, mass hysteria, suggestive questioning, manipulation of evidence, and influenced testimonies. These features set aside witch-trials from any other forms of prosecutions. Moreover, witch-hunts should be contextualized when studied to offer a better understanding of the process. That is why putting the persecutions within its sociopolitical context gave a possible explanation to the causes of witch-hunt emergence, arriving at religious beliefs, social conflicts, ethnic hostility, differences of political ideology, and exert of power.

Chapter Two

The Salem Witch Trials (1692) and The Red Scare (1948-1957)

Introduction

Western history is full of instances of witch-hunt throughout different ages and places. Perhaps the most infamous episode of witch persecutions is the Salem Witch Trials of the 17th century in New England. This particular witch-hunt became notorious due to its length and incredible proceedings. Similarly, 20th century America witnessed a revival of witch prosecutions that focused on Communists. This hunt became known as the Red Scare, in which the “Red” refers to communism. This chapter explores the two historical events along their important milestones. First, it tackles the Salem Witch Trials with its prominent hearings and figures. Then, it shifts to the Red Scare, in which the chapter discusses the fear of communists along investigation committees; finally, arriving at the controversial era of McCarthyism.

I. The Salem Witch Trials

I.1. Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 1690s

In 1691, William Phips was appointed as the new Massachusetts Bay Colony Governor through an English charter. A year after, the Salem witch hysteria occurred. In the period prior to the witch-hunt, the Massachusetts Bay Colony experienced a number of pressuring circumstances. To start with, the colony experienced hard winters accompanied by snow and chilling weather (Mixon 23, 33). The harsh climate led to poor harvest and scarcity of food supply (Woolf 457). Moreover, English settlements, including Massachusetts Bay Colony, were in distress because of the First and Second Indian Wars⁴ that erupted in the northeast settlements and close to the borders of the colony. The war harmed New England’s economy since the northeast areas were vital to the production of fish and timber (Norton 362). In addition to that, domestic relations between Salem Village and Salem Town were filled with

⁴ The First Indian War or King Philip’s War (1675-1678) and the Second Indian War, also known as King William’s War (1688-1697) erupted between the English settlers and the Indians of Wabanakis with their French allies over lands and Christian Missionaries (Norton 106, 119, 121).

tension. Salem Village wanted to be independent from the Town, but the latter benefited from the Village's tax revenue and food supply. This factor caused internal conflict among Salem villagers because some wanted independence, and others liked the affiliation to the Town (Boyer and Nissenbaum 31-32; Ray 22). All these circumstances provided a background for the upcoming witch hysteria that would forever leave its imprints on Salem.

I.2. The Beginning of the Hysteria

It all started in January of 1692, In Reverend Samuel Parris' House, when his nine years old daughter Betty Parris and eleven years old niece Abigail Williams displayed weird behavior. The two girls exhibited odd symptoms of bodily contortion and strange noises (Baker 14). Afterward, the village's physician William Griggs declared that the girls were bewitched (Stewart 32). Because of his diagnosis, the girls were asked to reveal who hurt them. This demand led the girls to point the accusing figure towards their Indian slave Tituba and other two women named Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne. Other girls were afflicted with the fits and also accused the same women. An action that caused their arrest after the male guardians filed complaints (Baker 16). With these accusations and arrests the hysteria spread across Salem Village like a wildfire.

I.2.1. Initial Interrogation

Early questionings were conducted by Salem magistrates Jonathan Corwin and John Hathorne on February 29. They interrogated the women in an accusatory manner and pressed them for a confession. For instance, Hathorne expressed his distaste through questions such as, "What evil spirit have you familiarity with? Have you made no contact with the devil? Why do you hurt these children?" (Baker 17). This type of questioning conveys the interrogator's assumption that the suspect is already guilty. In this case, it meant that the magistrate believed that the women were truly witches. Every time the women denied the allegations, the girls contorted and cried claiming that the accused were torturing them (ibid.). When Tituba was

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interrogated, she denied the accusations at first but later confessed to witchcraft and accused the other women of being witches. She also claimed the existence of other witches in the village (Stewart 42-43). During her confession, the girls were quiet and did not have their fits, unlike their reaction to the other women. The magistrates decided that the suspect would go into trial for witchcraft, so they imprisoned them in Boston's Jail (Baker 19).

Quickly, the hysteria spread like wildfire, bringing new afflictions and new accused witches, including a minister. More hearings and interrogations were organized, carrying bizarre events like wailing girls and stories of ghost visions. Some afflicted girls would claim that the suspects' spirits were hurting them, although no one else in court would observe such claims.

I.2.2. The Court of Oyer and Terminer

On May 14, 1692, Governor William Phips returned to Massachusetts Bay, carrying a charter that repealed accordance with English laws. The Governor had to make an action concerning the ongoing events, especially that more people were accused and imprisoned. The jails were not in good condition. They were cold and smelly and the prisoners were tortured and shackled to the walls, which restrained their movement. Because of the crowded jails and increasing cases of witchcraft, Phips established the first official court which was the Court of Oyer and Terminer (which means hear and decide) on May 27. The board of judges consisted of nine individuals, including Corwin and Hathorne, although they were legally inexperienced, and the role of prosecuting attorney was assigned to Thomas Newton. Since the old laws had been repealed, the colony had no certified legislation. So far, the girls accused people of high political and social status and others outside Salem Village like Boston and Ipswich. The first trial was on June 2, during which it made use of witnesses' testimonies, physical examination of the witch's marks,⁵ and spectral evidence. The girls would claim that the accused's specters

⁵ It was believed that witches had marks which distinguished their nature (Baker 27).

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were tormenting them. The judges sentenced the first suspect, Bridget Bishop, to death for witchcraft. Her execution occurred on June 10 and it was the first of 19 total deaths that would come in the following trials. After her death, Nathaniel Saltonstall, one of the judges, quit the court because of its absurd happenings. As a result, he was also accused of witchcraft (Baker 25-30).

There were petitions written by ministers who disagreed with the use of spectral evidence. Besides, there was a rise of some opposition among villagers because of the deaths of prisoners in jail. Despite that, the Court continued its proceedings, convicting more people and sentencing them to death. With each trial and execution, spectators started to question the validity of the decisions. When John Burroughs, a minister, was about to be executed, he recited the Lord's Prayer. Supposedly, an action that witches cannot perform. His death with others on September 22, was the last executions in the Salem Witch Trials. Hereafter, prominent figures, including Minister Increase Mathers, signed a petition against the use of spectral evidence. This act, along the accusing of Phips' wife, put an end to the Court of Oyer and Terminer on October 29 (Baker 30, 35, 38-40).

I.3. The End of The Trials

On December 1692, the Superior Court of Judicature was established to carry on the trials. It based the conviction on concrete evidence. The Court proceeded its hearings throughout January and February of 1693. Some captives were released and others were not even summoned to Court. Only three persons who admitted to witchcraft were convicted, putting an end to the suffering of Salem villagers (Baker 41). The hysteria destroyed many lives and turned families, friends, and neighbors against each other. Salem's tragic history would be forever remembered as one of histories unsolved mysteries. Today, the state of Massachusetts commemorates Salem Witch Trials' victims through the establishment of a memorial in Danvers. The memorial was built on May 19, 1992, and it is called The Salem

Village Witchcraft Victims Memorial.

II. The Red Sacre

II.1 The Red Scare of 1948-1957

After the Second World War ended in 1945⁶, the alliance between the United States and The Soviet Union expired. The two parties embarked on a long cold war sparked by several differences. Among which, differences in their ideology and economic systems, the Soviet's aspiration to turn the world into a Communist empire (Reeves 141-142), the American invention of the atomic bomb in 1945, followed by, the Russians' similar weapon in 1949, and finally, the Soviet army's march on Eastern Europe, violating the Yalta Agreement⁷ (Lieberman 02). These elements caused the already strong disagreement and rivalry between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) to grow into an inevitable cold war (Michaels 108-110). The tension also resulted in America's fear of foreigners, specifically communists who were labeled as "Reds" and considered as radicals. These radicals were thought to have a subversive agenda that seeks to overthrow the American government (Michaels 21).

II.1.1. Loyalty Investigations

President Harry Truman created a loyalty program which sought to constrict any domestic subversion. The program screened lists, which had no selection criteria, of federal workers and organizations to expose any disloyal agents. Over four million individuals were listed for investigations; however, no definite Communists were found. The loyalty screenings soon expanded to state and municipal government employees and private businesses. In case

⁶ World War II (1938-1945) is a destructive war that caused a lot of material and emotional damage for people all around the world. It killed millions of people and destroyed many lands.

⁷ Yalta Agreement is the postwar conference in Yalta, Crimea, on February 4-10, 1945. The convention was established between the Soviet Union, England, and the USA to discuss postwar matters (Reeves 133-134).

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of suspicious discoveries, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) would investigate further and question anybody related to the suspects (Michaels 111-114).

II.1.2. The Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA)

The American Communist Party emerged after the split of the Socialist Party. It promoted socialism, organized labor, and fought fascism. The party also defended racial civil rights, including African Americans. Still, its ideals and motives were questioned. According to C. Dale Walton, Soviet spies infiltrated the American government and the entertainment industry. It was also believed that the CPUSA and other American Communists and sympathizers,⁸ also known as “fellow travelers,” conducted actions of espionage. Moreover, according to Walton, the Soviet Union chose party’s leaders and the two had a close connection (Lieberman 01, 04). These suspicions put the party into inspection during the Cold War. Although its membership was not illegal, its members were persons of interest and constant suspects.

II.1.3. The House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC)

The House Committee on Un-American Activities, also known as the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), was created in 1938 by Chairman Martin. As the name entails, the committee specialized in investigating un-American activities that threaten the safety of the United States. The committee focused its mission on exposing double agents, especially within the American Communist Party. The latter insisted on their independence from Moscow when in 1938, their Leader Earl Browder testified before the Congress expressing, “we are an independent body. No one controls us.” He further refused the accusations of housing spies within the party or in the United States for that matter. Despite his testimony, the U.S Army Intelligence decoded several telegrams sent by Soviet agents in America to their superiors in the Russian capital in 1944. In which, the CPUSA’s head Browder

⁸ Sympathizers or “fellow travelers” were the labels of people who sympathized with Communists.

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updated the progress of some recruited spies in the party. Those documents also exposed other spies, including Alger Hiss, who was defended by President Truman when he was facing espionage accusations. A few of these agents confessed to espionage while others denied the accusations. The committee brought into investigation many suspected people, whether by action or association with members of radical organizations. Being a friend, neighbor, or a family member of a suspected Communist made the person a suspect by extension. People's lives got destroyed, and many were left jobless. During the Hollywood investigation, witnesses who refused to cooperate were blacklisted in the industry. The freedoms of speech, assembly, and association were all curtailed during these interrogations. The accused did not even have the right to confront their accusers or the right to cross-examination and evidentiary rules. Some of the tactics used by the committee in achieving their purpose caused damage to many innocents and cost them their freedom. President Truman attempted to stop funding the committee, yet they proceeded with their hearings, exposing other spies among whom some confessed, and others insisted on their innocence (Lieberman 61-64).

II.2 McCarthyism

Joseph McCarthy was an ambitious politician from Wisconsin. He became the Republican candidate and winner in the 1946 Senate elections. Seeking to make a name of himself, McCarthy promoted himself as an anti-Communist who strived to keep the red threat into check. He later became the chairman of the Senate Committee on Government Operations and its Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations in 1953-1954 (Lieberman 116).

II.2.1. Beginning of McCarthyism

McCarthy's journey of political stardom started on February 9, 1950, when he made a speech in The Republican Women's Club in Wheeling, West Virginia. He addressed the rising threat of communism in America. Additionally, he suggested that the country is now in a war of ideology between "Communitistic atheism and Christianity." He insisted on the existence of

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Communists within the government and exaggerated their number, yet he did not uncover any new subversives. The ones he exposed were the findings of previous investigating committees in 1946, and they had been fired. He proceeded to name five figures in his speech, among whom, only three were Communists and already been unveiled by the FBI and HUAC (Michaels 146, 148, 150-151).

II.2.2. The Start of his Accusations

McCarthy asserted his position when he won the Senate election of 1950 (Lieberman 116). His hunt for communism and their sympathizers extended to the US government. He accused Truman's administration of being tolerant and soft on Communists. The *Amerasia* affairs⁹ only fueled the senator's allegations. This scandal led McCarthy to accuse the administration of covering up for espionage. Furthermore, he continued criticizing the president and his administration by referring to Alger Hiss and accused them of "high treason." As a retaliation, the Democrats formed an investigation committee headed by Millard Tydings to expose the senator. McCarthy sought the help of future president Richard Nixon to obtain the HUAC's information to defend his claims. Additionally, he formed a team with the help of J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the FBI¹⁰. Hoover leaked information on people he perceived as enemies, including President Truman and the Central Intelligence Agency. Moreover, McCarthy learned how to arouse public fear and interest and how to manipulate and use the media to his favor (Michaels 150-157).

II.2.3. Attacking the State Department

McCarthy continued to make allegations expressing, "I don't answer allegations. I make them." He referred to the supposed loss of China to communism, accusing a group of

⁹ The Amerasia Affairs: it was a raid on the Amerasia magazine headquarter where classified documents were found by the Office of Strategic Service (OSS), and later the FBI. Some individuals were arrested, yet no proof of distributing the documents to a foreign body was ever found (Michaels, 153).

¹⁰ Hoover disliked the president and his team. This animosity was due to the fact that the FBI lost its impact in the Cold War and that the greater part of the mission was shifted to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1947 (Michaels 156).

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officers from the State Department, known as “China Hands,” of treason. Tydings Committee described his accusations as “fraud and a hoax.” The committee concluded the efficiency of the State Department’s security program. Instead, he accused them of being subordinate to Communists. McCarthy realized that he did not need proofs to support his allegations. As long as the press kept publishing them, the public opinion would validate them. Other events like the Korean War, the conviction of Alger Hiss, the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, and the confession of Klaus Fuchs, a scientist in the Manhattan project who admitted of delivering information about the bomb to the Soviets, added support to McCarthy’s attack on the State Department (Michaels 157, 162-163).

II.2.4. Attacking Truman’s Administration

The senator’s targeted the president’s administration personnel, starting with the Secretary of State Dean Acheson then Secretary of Defense and former Army’s Chief of Staff George C. Marshall. He described the latter as an “instrument of a Soviet conspiracy.” He composed a story of conspiracy that sought “to diminish the United States in world affairs, to weaken us militarily.” His sole evidence was the poor decisions made by Marshall. In the elections of 1952, McCarthy supported fellow Republican Dwight Eisenhower, by making a speech in which he claimed that the Democrat candidate Adlai Stevenson was “sympathetic to communism and had aided the Communist cause.” This publicity was not only for Eisenhower’s benefit but also a promotion of McCarthy’s upcoming elections (Michaels 168-171, 173).

II.2.5. The Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Government Operations

Senator Joseph McCarthy headed an investigating subcommittee that facilitated his Communist hunt. The Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Government Operations conducted 161 closed hearing sessions with over 500 witnesses on

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subversion and espionage (Craig 87). The hearings were only televised when actual Communists were exposed. During open hearings, witnesses were intensely questioned by McCarthy and his chief counsel Roy Cohn. To get names and confessions, McCarthy misled the witnesses through a misconception of their constitutional rights. He also promised them confidentiality, but their names were published by the press, with an exaggeration of their statements. Because of his crusades, radical literature was censored, and many controversial books were burned. Some writers were even questioned because of their writings. For example, Arthur Miller was interviewed by the HUAC in 1956 and was charged with hate of congress because he refused to give names of colleagues. Moreover, documents of McCarthy's committee's hearings showed inadequate staff, subpoena mistakes, and shallow work of investigators (*ibid.*, 87-89).

II.2.6. The Downfall

The early 1950s were successful years that put Senator Joseph McCarthy on the political map. However, his greedy ambition ultimately caused his downfall. His next target was the US Army. In 1954, he proclaimed the discovery of an espionage ring in a Signal Corps Center at Monmouth in New Jersey. This claim was a false accusation that had been checked before by both the Army and the HUAC. His only proof was the promotion of Army dentist Irving Peress who was a suspected Communist because he refused to take a loyalty oath. During Irving's questioning, he repeatedly pleaded the fifth as an answer to his political affiliations and choices. Maddened by Irving's promotion and his responses, McCarthy accused him of being "a traitor to the country as part of the Communist conspiracy." And he demanded to know, "who promoted Peress?" (Michaels 173-174).

President Eisenhower soon realized that the senator had overstepped his boundaries and that he should be stopped. Vice President Richard Nixon made a speech in which he described McCarthy's approach as "reckless talk and questionable methods" without explicitly

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mentioning his name. Yet, the public took the reference to be the presidential reaction to McCarthyism. Public figures started speaking against him, including Republican and Senator Ralph Flanders and journalist Edward R. Murrow. He criticized him in a CBS show stating, “His primary achievement has been in confusing the public mind. . . We must remember always that accusation is not proof and that conviction depends upon evidence and due process of law.” McCarthy responded to Murrow’s attack by insulting and labeling him another Communist sympathizer. Accusing someone of communism and subversion had always been McCarthy’s weapon every time someone opposed him or refuted his claims. However, defaming Murrow ruined the senator’s reputation even more (Michaels 175-176).

The Army took actions of their own against McCarthy and his committee by investigating his staff. The Army submitted a report on Cohn’s inappropriate proposition alongside his threat to the secretary of Army Robert Stevens. McCarthy’s committee was given the chance to resolve the allegations against it in the Army-McCarthy Hearings. Republican Karl Mundt acted as the committee’s chairman; John G. Adams was the Army’s Counsel and Boston Lawyer Joseph Nye Welch as Special Counsel. Without Hoover, who stopped supplying evidence, McCarthy was in a compromising position. The hearings started on April 22, 1954; they were televised for the majority of the public to watch for the upcoming 36 days. Welch exposed McCarthy’s underhanded strategies like forging letters and photos to which the senator kept interrupting the hearings by demanding “point of order!” He even kept accusing one of Welch fellow lawyers of being a Communist associate. Welch responded to his attack by stating, “Let us not assassinate this lad further, Senator. You’ve done enough. Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?” The hearings were not in favor of McCarthy. He started to lose both public and political support. The Senate censured him after he attacked the president, and the press lost interest in him, which remarkably marked

the end of his political reign. His fast decline and his drinking problem gradually caused his death on May 2, 1957 (Michaels 176-178).

II.3. The End of The Red Scare

After this political drama unfolded on national television, the Red Scare began to subside. Nonetheless, wariness of communism continued in forms of organizations, social, and cultural manifestations. By the end of the Red Scare, the Supreme Court passed down new decisions regarding subversive activities in the country, among which, a modification of the Smith Act. It stated that the First Amendment protected speech, not action. Furthermore, it put limitations on the power of investigation committees, something that angered some people in and out of the government such as the Conservatives and the *US News and the World Report*, who described it as “treason’s greatest victory” (Michaels 178-179). Besides, the causes of the Red Scare had diminished bit by bit throughout the years. Stalin had died in 1953, North Korea settled a truce with the United Nations, and McCarthy’s followers channeled their passion for supporting Eisenhower’s administration. Additionally, the media, which previously had a massive part in publicizing the subversion threat and raising the public fear, lost interest in the Red menace and no longer included relating headlines (Reeves 152).

Conclusion

The Salem Witch Trials and the Red Scare are both defining periods of American history. The events of both episodes were charged with emotional fear and psychological distress not only for the accused people but also for the audience. The Court of Oyer and Terminer exhibited strange events such as ghost visions and invisible attacks. It was only when the Supreme Court of Judicature was established that the hysteria subsided. In the same fashion, the Red Scare was characterized by Communist prosecutions and public spectacles. The latter is more associated with McCarthyism during which, interrogations were publicized and promoted. After the end of both events, the stress and anxiety began to lessen, and regulations were made to ease the people and preserve the nation's security.

Chapter Three

Analytical Comparison between the Salem Witch

Trials and the Red Scare

Introduction

Despite the three-centuries gap, the Salem Witch Trials and the Red Scare share a number of key points that when closely inspected, would produce the same modal of witch-hunt. In order to identify the Red Scare as a witch-hunt model, this chapter compares and analyzes the events of the Red Scare and the Salem Witch Trials, focusing more on similarities and projects witch trials parameters on the Red Scare. The juxtaposition starts with comparing the factors that led to their emergence. Then, it proceeds to compare the elements of hearings, trials, social distress, and ultimately, their decline.

I. Social and Political Context

It is agreed upon that the Red Scare and the Salem Witch Trials share a number of common features. To begin this comparison, the emergence of these two events should be closely discussed. As beforementioned in the first chapter, historical events tend to be influenced by a set of circumstances that lead to their ultimate emergence. These circumstances could vary from internal to external.

To start with, social and political contexts played a major part in arousing these two events. Emerson Baker believes that the political and the legal unrest in Salem during 1692 reinforced the rise of the hysteria (98). Coupled with that, the process of witch trials in Salem started after heavy pressure from people of high social and political status in the village. Reverend Parris was a man of religion and was widely respected by his fellow churchmen. Alongside, Thomas Putnam who was a supporter of Parris and a father to one of the afflicted girls. The first complaints were filed by both Parris and Putnam who also participated in the initiation of almost half the trials. Putnam was a militia sergeant and a veteran of war. His brother-in-law is a militia captain who also has an afflicted daughter. These men of powerful status in addition to others were able to launch the trials with the help of Salem's magistrates,

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who one them is a relative to the Putnams. Additionally, the board of the judges in the Court of Oyer and Terminer were interconnected through family and were the colony's men of power in politics, economy, and military. However, Judge Saltonstall was not related to any of them and lived far away from the rest (Schiff 9, 13; Baker 162, 169). Besides, quarrels among the villagers started to appear because of the question of affiliation to the Salem Town. Boyer and Nissenbaum argue that the geography of Salem during the trials indicates a pattern of accusations as the accusers and the accused lived on opposite sides of Salem Village (28). Also, the war that took place near the Massachusetts Bay, affected the economy of New England. As discussed before, the settlements northeast Massachusetts Bay had been struck by the war. Those areas contributed to New England's economy by providing timber and fish. In fact, Mercy Lewis, Susannah Sheldon, and Sarah Churchwell were all war refugees in Salem and who also happened to be among the accusers (Norton 362, 364).

The Red Scare was also ignited by another set of social and political elements that shaped its development. First, politics was the main instigator in the scare. The United States' rivalry with the Soviet Union led to a rise of national measures against any threat to the country, such as loyalty oaths and deportation when necessary. The Soviet Union was gaining immense power by the time of the rise of the Communist Party with its Socialist ideals within the United States. Besides, communism was spreading at an alarming speed in Eastern Europe and later North Korea and China. This fact conveyed the notion of a possible Communist menace that could target the peace of the US, not to mention that the USSR and the US were engaging in a cold war that heightened the tension even more. In addition to that, postwar turmoil raised fear among Americans whose hatred towards foreigners had been ancient because of job competition and cultural differences. These causes increased the Red Scare in America and led to the creation of investigation committees that acted like Communist hunters.

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The social and political contexts of the two historical events align with Walton's idea that witch-hunting happens when these two circumstances are present and able to impact the legal system.

II. Accusations and Stigmatization

Accusations and stigmatization are a common element in any witch-hunt model. Thus, they are strongly evident in Salem's witch-hunt and the Communist scare. In Salem's witch trials, the initial accusations had been made by the afflicted girls; although, it was their male guardians who filed the legal complaint. Yet, the young girls were the ones who referred to the identity of the alleged witches. These accusations brought the suspected women into questioning. Since the Puritans were extremely religious, people who committed sins and religious crimes were a disgrace to the whole community. People in the seventeenth century cared a great deal about their reputation within their society. Therefore, being accused of any religious crime or being labeled as a sinner stigmatized one's life. Witchcraft, in particular, was despised since it caused so much harm and was directly linked to the devil. Hence, it was difficult for the accused women to defend themselves because they were painted as deceivers. Even the individuals who defended the alleged witches were accused of witchcraft, such as Judge Saltonstall.

In a similar light, many individuals were accused of being Communists or affiliated to radical organizations. Just like the Salem Witch Trials, being accused of communism destroyed one's reputation along their credibility in and outside of court. McCarthy used this tactic in his crusades as he accused many people of communism without actual evidence. His media manipulation and tactful accusations bought him credibility from the public. Furthermore, he used this leverage in naming others as Communist sympathizers when they refused to cooperate. Eventually, it became a strategy used by people to destroy their image and reputation through

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calling them Communists. Whenever he was opposed or criticized, McCarthy always retaliated by accusing the person of being a Communist or a sympathizer. He accused several bodies, including the president's administration, the State Department, and the Army of containing subversives. When the Senator was not getting the confession he desired, he employed the *argumentum ad hominin*, which attacked the suspect's personality. He used this argument against George C. Marshall when he ridiculed him for making bad decisions.

These examples prove the influential role that stigmatization and accusation had in the buildup of the trials. Stigmatizing a suspect made it look as if he or she is guilty as charged. This strategy becomes handy in shaping the public opinion and defaming someone's image through solely labeling them with the alleged guilt.

III. The Process of Trials

Witch tribunals are different than other types of trials. The former tends to have a specific pattern that dictates its proceedings. As discussed in the previous chapter, witch trials are not fair trials in which evidence is analyzed, and a proper defense system is provided. On the contrary, the decision making was biased, and the questioning was suggestive. The interrogators were accusative towards the suspects and already convinced of their guilt. None of the judges had a legal degree, but they presided the court because of their powerful status in the colony. These judges should be neutral before all evidence is presented. It is only afterward that they should make a judgment.

Likewise, McCarthy's Committee's hearings were not official trials, but they were portrayed to the public as such. Their appearance conveyed a trial's image even though they were not established on a legal foundation like a court hearing, the same as the HUAC's investigations, which supposedly uncovered subversion. They were publicized and constructed like a court in which they included attorneys, evidence, and witnesses, yet the latter benefited

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of no legal protection. During its Hollywood investigations, the committee led to the blacklisting of many who were uncooperative. Nevertheless, the committee did not reveal any Communist threat within the motion-picture industry.

This appearance of a fair trial illustrates that witch tribunals condemn more people than it exonerates. Additionally, witch-trials are further characterized by a lack of evidence and the use of informative witnesses.

III.1. The Nature of Evidence

Concrete evidence is one of the bases upon which a trial is conducted correctly. However, in witch tribunals, they are questionably used to make a conviction. The first court during the Salem Witch Trials was the Court of Oyer and Terminer. The judges relied on the chilling stories told by the afflicted girls. They also based their decisions on the fits that the girls had during the trials when the accused defending themselves. Besides, the court accepted the use of spectral evidence, which is the visions of specters by the afflicted girls. The latter allegedly described seeing the ghosts in the courtroom and seeing the accused's evil spirits. They further claimed that the suspects were invisibly hurting them through pinching, biting, and stabbing with pins. The judges also employed the "touch test," which is a test that supposedly ended the victim's suffering upon her contact with the witch that harmed her. Also, they performed a physical examination of the accused's body to find any witch marks that were highly believed for witches to possess. Baker explains that usually in witchcraft trials, there are two types of evidence that condemn a witch. The first is her confession; the second is two eyewitnesses who saw her practicing black magic (27). These types of evidence lacked in Salem's trials in 1692. The 19 executed victims never confessed to witchcraft; the other suspects who did, were treated better than the ones who did not. Moreover, the witnesses who

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testified linked their misfortunes to the accused and held them responsible for it. The recounts of the court proceedings exhibit the bizarre stories and events of the trials.

Similarly, McCarthy did not obtain enough evidence to condemn people of communism. During his hearings, he misled the witnesses in understanding their constitutional rights. He exaggerated the number of subversives in his claims. David M. Oshinsky, who wrote McCarthy's biography, pinpointed his difference from other senators in terms of his baseless allegation stating, "Would a United States State Senator go this far out on a limb without hard evidence? Would he dare to make fraudulent charges that could so easily be unmasked?" (Michaels 155). McCarthy managed to make his allegations believable without factual evidence. It is unexpected of a US senator to provide these claims based on lies. McCarthy depended on the FBI help and the information provided by the HUAC, yet the two were under fire for using underhanded tactics in gathering their intel. For instance, the FBI made use of precepting mail, planting bugs, and even invasion of facilities. In his reliance on the FBI, McCarthy claimed the existence of 57 subversives within the State Department to which an FBI agent commented, "We didn't have enough evidence to show there was a single Communist in the State Department, let alone 57 cases" (Michaels 122,157). This quote proves that the allegations depended more on shaping public opinion and not on actual evidence.

III.2. Witnesses' Testimonies

Witnesses' testimonies play a moving role in the development of any trial. Their statements could result in both innocence and condemnation. However, in witch trials, testimonies were mostly utilized to make a conviction. As a result, many people were condemned, and 19 others were executed for witchcraft in 1692 Salem. Initially, the afflicted girls' testimonies were a moving factor in the trials. Their exaggerated stories against the suspects influenced the judges' decisions. Other villagers testified against the accused by

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describing their encounters with them. Other instances, some who confessed to witchcraft claimed the guilt of the accused, like Tituba, who admitted to being a witch after the afflicted girls named her. She even confirmed the girls' accusations against the other two women. Other times, the accused's relatives testified against them. For instance, Margaret Jacobs was a seventeen-year-old girl who confessed to being a witch, and she even testified against her accused grandfather and Reverend Burroughs (Schiff 11; Baker 34). Nonetheless, these witnesses did not see any of the suspects performing black magic. Their statements were based on their input regarding the accused.

In the same fashion, some witnesses participated profoundly in supplying the names of supposed radicals. Unlike any prior accounts in history, the 1950s Red Scare saw the emergence of what is known as "professional witnesses." They were individuals who testified for money. These people provided the names of subversives during staff loyalty cases and the investigation committee's hearings. The ones who gave many names were paid handsomely by the Department of Justice and were frequently required to testify. Ex-Communists who gave their statements in front of many committees became accustomed to the process of testifying. In order to stay in high demand, some of these individuals exaggerated their intel. Another motive for their lies was the possibility that their stories could be developed into articles, books, or even movies (Michaels 161). These were the type of witnesses who the committees needed because they expressed a lot of information as opposed to uncooperative ones. The latter were treated badly and blacklisted in their jobs. For instance, McCarthy publicized his hearings only when witnesses were willing to talk but kept private the ones who were not useful to him.

The lack of proof and witnesses' testimonies in court are prominent features of witch trials. The manipulation and misuse of evidence added to the accused's condemnation. Similarly, witnesses' statements were an influencing force in charging the suspects, especially

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during the Salem Witch Trials. These two features were unjust and wrecked the lives of many innocent people because of the hasty judgment making.

IV. The Violation of Basic Human and Civil Rights

Another mutual element that the Salem Witch Trials and the Red Scare share is the disregard of human and civil rights. In 17th century Salem, human rights were not as celebrated as in later years (Stewart 39). For instance, lawyers did not possess the right to practice in exchange for money in Massachusetts until 1705 (Baker 26), which meant that the accused did not have a proper defense system to exonerate them. Moreover, the evidence used against them was circumstantial and based on the tales told by mentally unstable girls. Because of that, suspects were sentenced to death quickly, and their attempt to rebuke the allegations were invalid. For example, Giles Cory chose silence as a response to the accusations against him. His silence is a modern representation of the Fifth Amendment, which protects against self-incrimination¹¹. As a result, Cory was tortured by *peine forte et dure*, in which he was pressed between stones and boards until his demise. Other people like Rebecca Nurse and Martha Cory, who disbelieved the afflicted girls and thought the hearings were absurd. They were accused too because of their candid opinion (Stewart 44-45, 61-62). Furthermore, the jails were in poor condition. The cells were cold during winter, humid and hot during summer. They reeked of foul-smelling odors and body wastes. The prisoners were chained to the wall and forbidden from resting. They even paid the fees for their jail time and chains, not to mention the amount of people waiting for trial (Stewart 51-52).

In the same light, The Red Scare curtailed citizen's civil rights, particularly the ones suspected of subversion. During the HUAC sessions, the accused did not possess the right to

¹¹ The Fifth Amendment protects the witness from self-incrimination, which means he or she has the right not to answer on a question that might cause his or her indictment (Levy and Karst. 2232).

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evidentiary rule, cross-examination, or to confront their accusers. They were not even defended properly because of the limitations imposed on their lawyers. Pleading the Fifth became a reference to communism, and whoever used it was described as “Fifth Amendment Communist.” Identically, using the First Amendment as a refusal to give statements risk charging the witnesses Contempt of Congress, which meant the witness is disobedient in court. Some witnesses who raised their voices were cited with contempt of Congress, which could lead to legal appeals or even jail time. The First Amendment protects the freedom of speech, assembly, and association, which all had been violated during hearings of both the HUAC and McCarthy’s Committee. Association with any individual suspected of communism was an offense itself and was interpreted as affiliation and acceptance of communism. Witnesses who forgot events that happened years ago were discredited and accused of lying. Also, they were prevented from explaining their statements if it was inconvenient for the committee.

During Salem’s witch-hunting and the Red Scare’s communist-hunt, prosecutors violated civil rights to achieve their purpose and gather as much information as possible. In doing so, they used every available legal and illegal means at their disposal. Generally, the illegal approach is more undergone since it brings them closer to their aim. Civil freedoms of opinion, speech, and choice should be preserved at all costs in and out of court; however, witch trials manifest that these simple liberties are disregarded when it is convenient to the bodies of authorities.

V. Mass Hysteria and Public Terror

Public terror and mass hysteria are widely spread during witch trials. Life in Salem was hard enough because of the cold winter, the economic hardships, and the war taking place near the Massachusetts border. All of these elements, in addition to the witchcraft hysteria, added to the rising anxiety of the people. Salem villagers were distraught with the newly spread witch

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accusations. Its randomness made people wary of each other as no one knew who would be accused next, especially that the accusations encompassed people of different occupation, age, gender, and social status. As Salem village was a religious community, they depended on religion in many aspects of their lives. They feared the wrath of God and aspired to apply his teachings. They believed that misfortunes like bad crops, diseases, and conflicts were all God's retribution for their sins (Stewart 10). Hence, they interpreted the witchcraft hysteria as God's punishment to them. That is why the villagers attempted to cure the girls' fits with prayers. At that time, not many illnesses had been discovered both psychologically and physically; thus, bewitchment was the only explanation they had for the newly spread disease. Moreover, the scary stories that the girls and some of the witnesses told increased the public's fear in Salem.

In the same way, Americans during the Red Scare were alarmed by the rising threat of communism. The Red Scare emerged after the end of the Second World War, which already caused trauma to people with the horrors it brought. When the war ended, America embarked on a cold war with the Soviet Union because of which communism became the national enemy in the United States. In addition to that, communism spread across Eastern Europe and later to North Korea and China. This fact enlarged the fear of the possibility that communism would reach America and radicalize all aspects of American life. The hunt for subversives in different sectors and industries threatened a lot of people's jobs. Immigrants were fired from their jobs and deported based on radicalism. Other individuals who had connections to subversive organizations were known as sympathizers.

The media also augmented the fear of the public with the propagandized stories of subversion and Bolshevik crimes against humanity. Moreover, Americans were already in a hostile relationship with immigrants who threatened their jobs. Many were disturbed by the cultural differences these newcomers were carrying. Americans were overwhelmed with the

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new languages, traditions, ideals, and religions that were growing in the United States. Not only were their jobs threatened, but also their way of living was susceptible to change. Because of many diversities within the American population, American identity became threatened. Anti-radical committees issued warnings related to the dangers of communism. For example, the HUAC published a document in 1948, with the title “100 Things You Should Know About Communism in the USA.” This Document is an educating pamphlet about the alleged Communist conspiracy in the States. The tone of its writing conveys the biased opinion of the committee that believes in communism being a lurking threat, waiting to overthrow the American government. For instance, as an answer to what communism is, the committee wrote, “A system by which one small group seeks to rule the world,” other questions like, “Would I be better off than I am?” with the answer “No.” The rest of the answers are all written in a matter that incite hatred towards the Communist Regime. Expressing the dangers of the Communist peril was a way to ignite the sense of patriotism within people and prevent the possible radical influence on their opinion. Fear and distress were not only limited to Americans who were concerned about communism. Foreigners were also terrorized by the swelling hostility of people, especially in their place of work.

This climate of fear, as Douglas Walton phrases it, is a basic parameter in the expansion of witch-hunting. It is due to the rising distress of people that prosecutors managed to incriminate a large number of individuals. The growing allegations scared the mass because of its arbitrary pattern, which triggered mistrust, doubt, and disbelief among folks. These times of hysteria are a nightmare for people to experience. Restlessness and unease are constant emotions for the ones who go through trials and the ones who watch from the outlines.

VI. The Decline of the Hysteria

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Like all historical events and after a long period of time, the witch-hunt craze dissipated eventually. After the execution of 19 individuals in Salem village, the hysteria disappeared gradually. The spread of awareness among the villagers is the main factor in its disappearance. They realized that innocent people had been killed. Moreover, the jails were full of people waiting for their trials. After refusing the use of spectral evidences in the Court of Judicature, fewer convictions were made. As the accusers' stories were no longer believed without solid evidence, the nature of the false accusations started to appear. Some even questioned the truthfulness of the fits that the girls had before. Also, the judges of the Oyer and Terminer Court were criticized because of their decisions that were unjust to many innocents. By the start of 1693, a few suspects were trialed and only three were convicted. Besides, others did not even appear in court. The lack of trials and convictions ended the witchcraft madness.

Similarly, the Red Scare subsided bit by bit after nine years of ongoing alleged Communist threat. Its subsidence is due to the public's disinterest in the radical hunt. The media also contributed to its end when it stopped publicizing the Communist propaganda. Previously, the media had played an impacting part in spreading the supposed risks of communism and radicalism in different sects of American life. Another reason for its collapse was the criticism that investigation committees faced. FBI director J Edgar Hoover and his agency were under fire for their illegal methods in gathering intel. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg's case is a testament to his misconduct. Hoover dragged Ethel into her husband's prosecution despite her innocence. The two were executed for espionage, although none of them confessed to the crime (Lieberman 173). Senator McCarthy was counterattacked by the president's administration and the Army, which brought his downfall. He was also nationally humiliated and exposed on television during the McCarthy-Army hearings.

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The public attention added to the growth of the witch-hunt hysteria. People became occupied with the events and attuned to the next updates. Despite the spread of fear and uncertainty, the mass were the ones who gave importance to the escalating hysteria.

Conclusion

The comparison between the Salem Witch Trials and the Red Scare gives a closer look at the similarities which the two possess. The first eminent factor is the spread of the mass hysteria and terror among people. Moreover, the violation of human rights is evident in the proceedings of the two events. Also, suspects were quickly convicted with Communist and witchcraft accusations. Furthermore, the two historical events invoked a strong feeling of anxiety and distress among the ones put on trial and the ones who observed the process. The two events were a rough patch in the American history as they were such difficult and defining times for the mass. The witchcraft trials were a testament to the false execution of judgment in the name of religion. As for the Red Scare, it displayed the abuse of power in achieving personal objectives for the sake of gaining more control and recognition.

General Conclusion

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Witch-hunting is a process whose meaning surpasses the evident notion of prosecuting witches. Throughout history, people have been persecuted in Europe and America for witchcraft, on different scales but with shared passion. Witches have existed ever since ancient times up till this age. For instance, some countries in Africa and Latin America still believe in witches and the practice of witchcraft. Still, the concept of witch-hunting is not limited to magic and sorcery. The term signifies the legal prosecution of a specific group based on their religion, ideology, ethnicity, or political views. This research explored both definitions and gave examples of the two meanings. It precisely focused on the events of the Salem Witch Trials of the 17th century and the Red Scare of the 20th century. The research aimed to prove that the Red Scare is a reincarnation of the Salem Witch Trials, and consequently, a model of witch-hunt. In verifying this objective, the research paper was divided into three chapters that divulged more information regarding witch-hunting as a model and the two historical events.

The Research started with a brief history of the subject in which it described witch-hunting in early modern Europe (from the 15th century until the 18th century) and mentioned the oscillating rate of the prosecutions. Then, it shifted to witch-hunts in New England during the 17th century. Later, the chapter defined the connotation of the concept, and it gave the examples of the German Holocaust and the Bosnian Genocide as a manifestation of Jews and Muslim persecutions in Germany and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Following the concept definition, the research enumerated witch-hunt parameters that include stigmatization, public hysteria, illusion of a fair trial, manipulation of evidence, biased testimonies, and the negligence of human rights. Numerous scholars and historians dedicated their efforts to study this phenomenon in an attempt to clarify and conclude all possible reasons for its emergence. In doing so, they explored the event from various facets, employing several approaches. The studies also took into consideration some factors such as the geography of the hunts, structure of communities, economy, climatology, social dynamics, and politics. This research paper

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focused on the sociopolitical contextualization of witch-hunting in order to have a broader analysis of the phenomenon and its relevant features.

The second chapter provided a historical background of the events in question. First, it discussed the Salem Witch Trials of 1692, explaining the external and internal circumstances which surrounded Massachusetts Bay Colony at the time. Afterward, it traced the beginning of the hysteria with its leading figures who were the afflicted girls of Salem and the alleged witches. It recounted the initial accusations that were made by the young girls and their consequential trials, starting with the Court of Oyer and Terminer. Many people were arrested and sent to jail in Boston to wait for trial. The court that was established by Governor William Phips sentenced 19 individuals to death based on unsolid evidence. This unnerving event came into an end after the establishment of the Supreme Court of Judicature, which refused the use of spectral evidence. Still, the Salem hysteria will forever be a stigmatizing memory in American history. The second part of the chapter tackled the Red Scare of 1948-1957. Its emergence was due to a variety of reasons that encompassed social, ideological, and political causes. The end of the Second World War in 1945 broke the American-Soviet alliance. Americans became wary of the Soviets, especially with their aspiration to spread communism globally. Communism became the national enemy that needs to be eradicated, leading to a nation-wide communist hunt. The American government created committees dedicated to the sole purpose of exposing subversives. They used both legal and illegal tactics to achieve their aim. The most notorious part of the Red Scare was the era of McCarthyism that lasted from 1950 until 1954. The name is derived from its leading figure, Senator Joseph McCarthy. Despite the shortness of the period, it was one of the 20th century's milestones. The Senator made a name for himself through establishing an anti-Communist reputation. He attacked the State Department and the president's administration. What is remarkable about McCarthy is the fact that he made allegations without concrete evidence. Yet, his time abruptly ended when he shifted his

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accusations to the US Army. The chapter then concluded with the end of the Red Scare, pointing out the changes that led to its subsidence.

The third chapter was a comparative analysis of the Red Scare with the Salem Witch Trials, focusing mainly on the shared points between the two historical events. First, the comparison began with analyzing their sociopolitical contextualization to indicate their manner of emergence. The two events were influenced by several factors that gradually led to their rise. For instance, they were both affected by the political changes and the social dynamics within their communities. Furthermore, the comparison moved to analyzing how accusing and stigmatizing the suspects contributed to their condemnation. These two elements were defining factors in spreading the hysteria as they propagandized the actual proceedings. Later on, the analysis shifted to the trials, precisely their conduct in terms of evidence and witness testimonies. As the two examples illustrated, evidence in witch trials could be unreliable and lacks credibility. Equally, witness testaments are also biased and unverifiable. Besides, these persecutions violated basic human rights like the freedom of speech, religion, assembly, and association; albeit, these freedoms were not as much established in the 17th century as they were in the 20th century. Finally, the chapter concluded the analysis by comparing the decline of the hysterias and discussed the reasons behind its disappearance.

The focal point of the analysis was to present the similarities between the Salem Witch Trials and the Red Scare. By doing so, the research paper concluded that the Red Scare fits the model of a witch-hunt. Douglas Walton identified the key parameters which distinguish witch tribunals from other types of legal prosecutions. Hence, through extracting these features and applying them to the Red Scare, the latter produces a model of witch-hunting.

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