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Misbah Aslam
Department of English
Literature, University of
Sargodha campus, Lahore
Pakistan.

How O'Neil in Mourning Becomes Electra and Arthur Miller in Crucible has presented Puritanism and how do they portray it?

Misbah Aslam

Abstract

According to Karl Marks, "History is nothing but a class distinction". It seems apparently, but it is generally belief that history repeats itself. As two writers Arthur Miller & O'Neil have presented Puritanism, its flaws & ugliness through their piece of writing. From the very beginning Christianity has divided into two major sects, Puritans & Protestants. Their logical & illogical perceptions, demands & the ways to present them as a religious fellow created a volcanic eruption in the life of the common man & followers. As we see the destructive elements of it in the life of John Procter in Crucible & Levenia in Mourning Becomes Electra. Both events occurred in America. Having the same dispute & devilish acts which leads the characters at the edge of downfall.

Keywords: Puritanism, Crucible, Electra

Introduction

Savera Hotles Limited- A Prelude

The Puritanism was a group that had suffered religious persecution in the old world and came to America for the sole purpose of establishing their religion in a place where they would be free of persecution of any type. After enduring the personal persecution in England and elsewhere, the Puritans, in turn, became the persecutors when they arrived in America. The roots of Puritanism are to be found in the beginnings of the English reformation. The word 'Puritanism' sometimes was called 'precisionist'. For the first time, Puritanism was developed in 1530s. When King Henry VIII repudiated papal authority and transformed the Church of Rome into a state church of England.

The unusual nature of their religion lent itself to all types of persecution and fear of witches. The Puritanism was a type who felt that their way of life was absolutely right, and all other ways were wrong. They would allow no person to remain in the community. Who was not a member in good standing with the church history tells us of people being driven into the wilderness when it was revealed that they possessed a religion different Puritanism puritans came into new England 17th century. As it is presented in "The Crucible" by Arthur Miller, that most of the Puritans viewed witchcraft as the work of the devil.

Arthur Miller has presented the true picture of their believers and conduct. Most of the historians are agreed that Puritanism viewed witchcraft as the work of the devil. In 'The Crucible' by Arthur Miller and in 'Mourning becomes Electra' by O'Neil presenting the caricatures of the Puritan believers. They are presenting the true picture of the American people, who were caught by the rigid, unbelievable and non-religious authorities.

During the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth century, belief in the reality of witches was widespread both in America and in Europe. Thousands of people were executed during the period and few people questioned the actual existence of witches. In the minds of the Puritans, people could be possessed by the devil do evil they could also choose to do his work by entering an agreement, or contract, with him the element of choice had great important. Some who chose to work for the devil posed more of a threat the someone possessed.

The Puritans believed that every individual answered to God. To work for the devil meant turn against God and everything that the Puritan believed. Religion did not only matter on Sunday puritans beliefs were part of their daily lives. They used to say that prayer might work for someone who had a contract with the devil. In those cases, unless the parson realized their wrong doing and prayed for forgiveness was to eliminate the evil. So, the Puritanism did that by hanging convicted witches.

Many Puritans believed that people who agreed to do the work of the devil joined secret groups

Correspondence

Misbah Aslam
Department of English
Literature, University of
Sargodha campus, Lahore
Pakistan.

by singing a special book. They would fly on brooms or strikes to meet with other witches and the devil. Witches were accused of cursing their neighbor, killing babies, making people and animal's ill and being intimate with the devil.

As it is seen in the *Crucible*, when Abigail and her friends dance and take the charm nakedly in the jungle. Just to show off the people of Salem that they are really under the spell of witches. While they want to kill the wife of Proctor. On the other hand according to Puritanism, it was a great sin to dance. And if once a man sinned, he must first openly confess his sin then repent and finally perform some act of penance.

Without open confession, a person had no chance of ever being saved. Consequently, in 'The Crucible' many people are ready to confess because they know that they will then be forgiven; but without confession, they stand the possibility of being hanged. It seems needless to point out the irrationality of such a view, which lent itself to many false confessions to avoid hanging.

One of the worse sins a man could commit was that of adultery consequently, John Proctor made the supreme effort when he himself confesses to this most terrible sin. As Hawthorne is handling of the concept of adultery in the *Scarlet Letter*. Another concept of Puritanism that is important is the view of 'Theocracy'.

The Puritanism believed in a government that was totally controlled by the church. If a person was not a member of the church, he could not vote in elections so, a person like John Proctor did not attend church, he could not be punished and excommunicated from the church, thereby losing all of his property and rights. The most annoyed remark for John Proctor was that which famous Puritanism minister, Jonathan Edwards, used to say,

“The God that holds you
Over the pit of hell, much as
One holds a spider, or some
Loathsome insect, over the fire
Abhors you, and is dreadfully
Provoked; his wrath towards you
Burns like fire, he looks upon
You as worthy of nothing else,
But to be cast into fire.”

This was the view of the Puritans that only their religion was approved by God.

In the same way, in "Mourning becomes Electra" waves the shabby picture of Puritans inform of the readers. He has used gray colour in the play as a symbol of the Puritans.

The portico is like an incongruous white mask foxed on the house to hide its somber gray ugliness of Puritans, Grandfather. Abe, whose Biblical name has dynastic implications, established a shipping business that made the fortune.

The family has all the visible earmarks of the predestined, these are simply outward show. Like the mansion, their Puritanism is full of dead men's bones, and the theology has no relish of salvation in it. "The Man on the Way" is a preoccupation with death, the cold remnant of Calvinistic dogma.

Another prominent feature of the Puritanism is their attitude towards sex. For O'Neil's generation, Puritanism was associated, first and foremost, with a repressive attitude towards sexual impulses. The attitudes of the town's people chorus underscore the conventionality of the play's Puritanism. The middle class and the proletariat fill out the picture; they reflect Menckens's contention that the Puritan secular code does not really present the aspirations of the society.

O'Neill's understanding of Puritanism provides conscious motivation to think in Puritan categories. They see their plight in this term. But the play writer and audience see their actions in a wider context that conflicts with but also in some sense explains the not clarify the darker matters that make the action inevitable that link crime to crime in necessary progress. Through the character of Livonia, we can see the harshness of the Puritans. They were used to say that the girls should not laugh or even to smile. They should always repent on that sin which their mother Eve had done in the Heaven.

The whole suffering of the world is only created by woman she allure the male to commit sin. On the other hand, mother Livinia can't live her life according to her own choice. She wants to escape from the realm of Ezra Mammon but she is unable to escape Puritanism has rusted their souls. They are nothing except the skeleton of the bones.

Conclusion

In general, the Puritans were a sober and fearful group who felt that anything pleasant was inspired by the devil. Women were forbidden to dress prettily. Children were not expected to play games, theatres were forbidden as being the breeding place of the devil and dancing of any kind was a cardinal sin. Consequently, when the young children were caught dancing in the woods, they pretended to be under the spell of witches so as to avoid punishment. The Puritans accepted the story that the Devil was once one of God's angels who had fallen from grace. After being thrown from heaven for betraying God the Devil set up a continual campaign to destroy the designs of God.

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