

Student Essay on Author Bias in "The Crucible"

Author Bias in "The Crucible" by Arthur Miller

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Essay

One of the ways that Miller reveals his views of the Puritans is through the character of Reverend Parris. Parris is a walking contradiction, a man of the church who suffers from irrational paranoia and a dislike of children. Miller appears to foreshadow the coming events by making the Reverend, who should be the most upstanding citizen in the village, the opposite of what one would expect. Miller is saying that the events that unfolded in Salem happened not in spite of the personalities of those involved, but because of them. In his mind, when the reader begins to identify the Reverend as a negative character, they begin to see the Puritan religion as a whole in a negative light. This sheds light on his beliefs about the Puritans, both as a religion and a people.

Another way he presents his views to the reader is by referring to the Puritan leadership as a junta that has seized power and insinuating that their views and beliefs were different than those of their forefathers. By referring to the leaders as a junta, he dredges up visions of brutal military dictatorships, violent revolutions, and simmering unrest. This is another example of Miller's disdain for the beliefs and actions of Puritans, both in Salem and elsewhere. His attempt to separate the people of Salem from the entire Puritan religion seems to be a slight apology, an attempt to focus his on a small section of people. The primary purpose of this is to show that the play is not purely an attack on Puritanism, but an attack on the mindsets and actions of those involved in the witch trials.

Another of Miller's injections of his beliefs into the play is to proclaim that history is still repeating itself, that even today society is still in the grip of the state of mind that led to the witch trials. He believes that unless society can recognize its faults and try to correct them, similar events to those at Salem will continue to take place. This is most likely a criticism of the McCarthy Trials, which Miller considered to be little more than a modern day witch hunt.