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## Glimpses on History in the Development of Neurosis and Depression in the Life of Arthur Miller: With Respect to His Plays

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### **Abstract:**

*Arthur Miller's growth as a creative visionary has been shaped by many influences, of which two are prominently traced out. First, the influence he inherited and second, that he experienced during the period of his growth. Both the forces are equally responsible in providing a personality that Miller claims to be his own. The tragic impulses the audience find in his plays are the creation of a creative faculty that is unique and belongs only to Arthur Miller. There were many playwrights who were his contemporary, and who shone, in some respects, brighter than he could. But, none could mesmerise the audience with such piercing accuracy, as Miller could. Undoubtedly, Miller's contemporaries are great in their own right and in their own chosen areas. But, Miller's area of creativity, that is, the genre of social tragedy remains unintersected by any of his contemporaries. His contemporaries, Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee, and his seniors, Elmer Rice and O'Neill, do have their impact on Miller. Miller is shaped by many other influences.*

### **1. Introduction**

It may be noted that lives in the contemporary society Miller belonged to were dominated by hysteria, neurosis and volatility of human psyche. It appeared as if everybody of that period was trapped miserably in an oven-like closet, and everyone was struggling hard to escape. Miller's protagonists with all the neurotic trends can well be comprehended if social conditions that shaped the psyche of Miller are understood. The age in which Miller found himself was most turbulent. The two Great Wars and the great depression of the thirties of the last century had distorted the social, economic and political spectra of the globe. Human sensibility was brutally smothered. The great distortion in socio-economic condition gave birth to deformed individuality. Miller, despite his inner sensitivity, was a child of that great turbulence. It is pertinent to recall what Miller himself said about the impact of contemporary social disturbance on his art – "I did not read many books in those days. The depression was my book."<sup>i</sup>

Arthur Miller was born in New York on October 17, 1915. As a child belonging to a middle-class Jewish family of Germanic origin, he shared the parental affiliation with two other siblings, the elder brother Kermit and the younger sister Joan. Isadore, his father, was a sensible man possessed with a great sense of humour, although his appearance was sturdy, steady and of visible severity. He was a successful businessman. Augusta, his mother happened to be a teacher in a public school at Manhattan. She was intelligent, civilised, and devoted to her children. Like a fond mother with the children at the core of her existence, she had set ambitions on her children.

Miller's parents were not orthodox Jews, but they observed Jewish customs. Obviously, the children grew up with unorthodox but traditional Jewish legacy. Arthur Miller was admitted in Public School 29 for his school education, but his area of interest remained detrimental to the high expectations of his mother. Throughout his school-days, Miller remained an undistinguished student and showed no sign of academic brilliance, although he was a good footballer and athlete. In 1928, when the great economic depression had just begun to take the world in its grip, Miller's family moved its base to Midwood section of Brooklyn. It was a beautiful place closed to Coney Island, where many of Millers' relatives had settled. Life in Brooklyn was certainly not that of wealth and affluence, as Arthur Miller himself calls it a place with "middle-class poor" surroundings. But, to the small boy, Arthur, it was place of serene beauty, undisturbed by lawlessness. Miller looks back retrospectively:

I don't recall any time when the cops had to be called. Everyone was so well and thoroughly known that the frown of his neighbour was enough law to keeps things in line. When we stole from the candy store, when we played handball against the druggist's window and broke it, it was enough for the offended proprietor to let it be known to the parents.<sup>ii</sup>

As long as Miller was at James Madison High School, he spent more time in playing football and participating in tracks and field events. While in school, he worked in a local bakery. He used to deliver bread and rolls every morning before going to school. His day began at five in the morning cycling around the streets with bulging bags in the basket of his bicycle. It was here working with the bakery that Miller got some idea of tragedy. He learnt his first lesson in punctuality and precision. Once while cycling in the streets to deliver the ryebread, rolls and bagels to the clients, his bicycle slipped on the icy pavement, and all the food articles scattered in all

directions. Utter confused, the boy picked up the packets strewn on the road and delivered to the customers. Naturally, the customers complained to the owner of the bakery and Miller lost his job. Benjamin Nelson writes:

By the time he made his deliveries and returned to the bakery the catastrophic results were pouring in. The baker, already plagued with gallstones, was now about to add apoplexy to his medical history. ...By the time Miller was able to explain, his stammered apology was useless. His employer was obviously in a state of shock.<sup>iii</sup>

The experience was the first lesson young Miller learnt. The dramatist-to-be confronted, for the first time, the situation of catastrophic potential that occurs in human life, and learnt the human sensitivity that makes him inexplicably buffering in such tense situation. However, Miller came out of this ignominy and passed from James Madison to Abraham Lincoln High School. Miller had cultivated a habit to remain anonymous in the school, "because the idea all of us subscribed to, was to get out onto the football field with the least possible scholastic interference."<sup>iv</sup>

Another event that taught a serious lesson to young Miller occurred in 1929 when millions of American suddenly found themselves out of the realm of economic comfort and financial luxury. Miller noticed a huge crowd milling in front of the Bank of the United States. He, as a young boy, remained aloof to the national calamity, because he had already withdrawn his whole saving of twelve dollars from the bank. But, the very next day, while he was taking snacks in the house, his bicycle was stolen. That was his first encounter with the great Depression. That was the period when only the postman was assured of his job.

After graduating from high school, Miller applied to Cornell University and to the University of Michigan. The Cornell University offered him free course in biology, but Miller refused to take admission, as he was not at all interested in the subject. Both the universities rejected his application. He then decided to look for job. His father was already in the garment business. So he started working for his father. The work of only a few days taught him that that was not his area of discipline. Nelson describes:

The job was claustrophobic, the people loud, and the tasks routinized. He particularly loathed the vulgarity and aggressiveness of the buyers who treated his father and the salesmen with arrogant contempt, and he became acutely aware of the meaning of self-respect when he saw how cruelly it was abused.<sup>v</sup>

The agonizing experience settled in the psyche of the young man. Later, it emerged as the first story 'In Memoriam'. Miller wrote the story only to give his ire a constructive outlet. The story of an awkward and volatile salesman in his advanced age, it could prove only to be an initial attempt of a creative giant.

After a few months, Miller finally said good bye to this tortuous job. He trudged from an employment agency to another, but got no suitable job. However, it proved to be a learning experience for the young man. The brutal reality he came across was that there was death of employment and employers were prejudiced against the Jews. Anti-Semitism was a distant reality he had merely heard of, but now he had experienced it himself.

Miller worked in different positions. From being a truck driver to a singer at a local radio station, he ran to variety of jobs. But, ultimately, he settled down for some time as a shipping clerk in a warehouse at Tenth Avenue in Manhattan. Miller earned fifteen dollars a week. It was a routine job with opportunity to venture into the realms of thrill and excitement. Miller wanted to make his life a thing of some sorts, but gradually sliding into the oblivion. During this phase of disturbed innerness, he turned to literature. It was an effortless inclination, not for getting rid of monotony of his existence, but for understanding life and the world in a better way. In particular, the Russian writer, Dostoyevsky impressed him with his Brothers Karamazov the most. Although much of its content was beyond his comprehension, dramatic situation in the form of conflict between the father and the sons, and between brother and brother kept him mesmerised. Miller was, specifically, amazed to find the sublime effort of the writer in dealing with the complexities of human life. Dostoyevsky's book proved to be a challenging experience and inspiring genesis to the young man who had just woken up to the world of imagination and elevated horizon. He read variety of books voraciously. He came to the basic reality of creativity. Sumptuous reading made him realise that writing could be an instrument of change. Through writing one can communicate, define one's experience, give shape to chaotic situation, and make some sense out of this senseless world.

Finally, he decided to get university education, and applied for readmission to the University of Michigan. In his request letter, he wrote that he had earned maturity and seriousness of purpose, and wanted to be a journalist. He got admission on the condition that he would get proper grades in his first semester. Miller left the warehouse with mixed feelings. It was the place which had shown the path to the young enthusiast. During his stay at the warehouse for about a couple of years had taught young Miller the diversity of human experience- from emptiness to despair and from hope to its fulfilment. The warehouse and his friends over there always remained in the hindsight. His semi-autobiographical play, *A Memory of Two Mondays*, recreates some of his experiences of the past. As Miller writes in the 'Introduction' of his *Collected Plays*, he learned "the heroism of those who know, at least, how to endure (hope's) absence"<sup>vi</sup> from the places and people he had opportunity to interact with in the past. In fact, the past experiences of working at various places and interacting with a range of people had taught Miller the impact of the world around the man on his nature-given personality, and the man's impact on the existing world around him. It was here that Miller learned to look deep into the core of the things. Obviously, his instinct got broadened, deepened, and excessively penetrative.

It was a turbulent period. The United States of America was passing through a lean phase of economy. Everywhere, Miller saw strikes and protests, labour unrest, and deep-rooted anger. His fellow students came from diverse socio-economic sections. They were sons of lawyers, doctors, businessmen, farmers, labourers, and even unemployed parents surviving on the government's relief-package. They formed an interesting group of diverse opinions. As diverse they were, they brought with them their particular beliefs, likings, and prejudices. Arthur Miller's education at Michigan proved to be a twenty-four hour affair. He enjoyed every minute of his existence in the campus, listening, interacting and digesting ideas and wisdoms that came his way from multiple corners.

Miller washed dishes at a cafeteria, worked as night editor in Michigan Daily, and tendered mice in the university laboratory to support himself. Although he had offered journalism as his major subject, he found himself inclined towards the Department of English. In particular, Professor Kenneth Rowe, who taught playwriting, was a great influence on Miller. Miller was, in fact, amazed by the professor's erudition, knowledge, and ability to reach into the inner faculties of the learners. But more than that, Rowe's dedication and his whole-hearted support to his students earned him reverence. Miller observes:

He may never have created a playwright, no teacher ever did, but he surely read what we wrote with the urgency of one who actually had the power to produce the play.<sup>vii</sup>

Although inspired by Professor Kenneth Rowe, Miller decided to write play merely to win Avery Hopwood Award which used to be given for best drama in two categories - \$ 250 to best dramatist from among undergraduate students and \$ 1250 to the best playwright from among graduates and other seniors. He wrote his first play in four days and titled it Honors at Dawn. Three judges, Alexander Dean, Edith Isaacs, and Alfred Kreyborg, went through all the entries and adjudged Miller's play as the best entry. Arthur Miller got money, recognition, and a feeling that a fruitful and creative vacation is in store for him. The next year, again Miller's play, No Villain, was selected by the judges, Allardye Nicoll, Percival Wilde, and Susan Glaspell, for Avery Hopwood prize.

The two plays, Honors at Dawn and No Villain, are still unpublished and unstaged. There are other plays, about half a dozen in number, Miller wrote in late 1930s and early forties which are unpublished. Miller calls them 'trunk plays'. These plays are important in the sense that they provide thematic direction Miller was likely to choose in the years of his maturity as a dramatist. Individual and his conscience are in perpetual conflict as Miller has visualised in Honors at Dawn. It is a struggle to win a meaningful place in the social spectrum, and the protagonist gets blessed with self-knowledge as a bi-product of the struggle. Profundity of the clash establishes the fact that Miller's protagonists are always emotionally charged, and they love to die for their self-honour. This trend of neurotic excitement continues in the plays he wrote later.

Like other protagonists of Miller's later plays, the hero of the early plays suffers from weakness of confusion. In fact, Miller's protagonist follows a common pattern of neurotic trend. The protagonist's vision remains outside the spectrum of the world around him. Bewildered as he is, he possesses dimmed vision of morality, and wanders in the avenues of reality-distorting illusions.

Miller's protagonist, in Honors at Dawn, is a young man Max Zabriskie, who works in a factory and takes part in the labourer's strike unwillingly. Blacklisted by the factory, he finds it difficult to get another job. So, he joins a college, where his elder brother is already enrolled. In his eyes, university is the citadel of idealism. But very soon, he discovers far-reaching corruption in the university system. Disillusioned as he is, he leaves the college and rejoins the union. He participates in the union activity with full commitment. Max's over-exaggerated faith in university's sacrosanct status is nothing but an illusion. In the life of Miller's protagonist, a situation emerges from within or outside which forces the protagonist to re-evaluate his beliefs of the past. And this re-evaluation causes self-realisation. Letter in All My Sons, accusation of witch-craft in The Crucible, and a mistaken identity in Incident at Vichy create situation for awareness of the protagonist.

There is another trend, neurotic in nature, which binds the protagonists of Miller's plays together. They all strive to put their lives to risk for the success of their children. In fact, they want to continue to live through their children. Subconsciously, they have egocentric solicitude to perpetuate themselves indefinitely. Of course, such desire may not be sometimes expressed overtly, their insinuations speak louder. For instance, Abe Simon's desire, in They Too Arise, is well expressed through his agonized cry to Ben when he comes to know that his business is completely ruined:

We're finished. Through. But Ben, some day I want you should – I wanna see you on top. You can do it Ben, without me. You gotta do it, Ben. It ain't fair that I should give my life like this and go out with – with nothing Ben! You hear me Ben? It ain't fair!<sup>viii</sup>

Abe's exclamation is similar to that of Patterson Beeves in The Man Who Had Luck. In the same way, Joe Keller works hard to justify the aims and deeds of his life in All My Sons. In Death of a Salesman, Willy Loman's dream for his sons, Biff and Happy, is as inflated and out of proportion as that of Abe Simon's. Again, the way Father outrageous cry at his sons after knowing about his ruination follows the same trend. The fact of the matter is that Abe Simon is the first protagonist who sets the tone of neurotic trend and other protagonists of subsequent plays simply follow.

In fact, Miller's protagonists love their sons so much so that they fail to communicate their feelings in entirety. Lack of communication between the father and the sons erects an impenetrable wall between them. Father figures of Miller's plays fail to read into the rebellious attitude of their sons. In the state of bewilderedness, they do not believe that familiar fences of old order are being decimated at fast pace, and new order with definitions new are settling down:

In my day when a father needed help all he had to do was open his mouth and like that! --he got it, no questions asked. Nowadays they go to college... they learn... they get so smart, they don't know how to work no more. But they ain't lazy... Years ago, they called it lazy... Now they call it principles. The elevator boys got em. The truckmen's got em, the shipping clerks got em. Only I ain't got em.<sup>ix</sup>

In 1938, Miller submitted They Too Arise to the panel which decided the Avery Hopwood prize for the graduates and the seniors. But, to his utter dismay, the panel found it too 'heavy' and 'turgid'. However, Miller's disappointment proved too short-lived, and he got a thousand-dollar prize from Bureau of New Plays. The prize was sponsored by Hollywood and organised by Theresa Helburn and John Gassner of the Theatre Guild. There was another reason for Miller's happiness and heightened spirit. He had found his love-lady in Mary Slattery, daughter of an insurance agent. Like Miller, she, too, had carved out her own path of progress. She had worked to financially support her college education.

Miller left the Michigan University in 1938 after getting the Degree of Bachelor of Arts. He had already got recognition as a playwright of substance through the two Hopwood awards for his early plays he had written as an undergraduate. But, life outside the campus was too terrible. To get a suitable employment in the period of Depression was very difficult. He writes:

I felt I had accomplished something there. I knew at least how much I did not know.... It had been a small world, gentler than the real one, but tough enough.<sup>x</sup>

However, his experience as a writer fetched him a job with the Federal Theatre's WPA. It was a writing project, which was newly-cultivated area of liking for Arthur Miller. In collaboration with Norman Rosten, he wrote a comedy, *Listen My Children*. Miller was the co-author of the play along with Rosten. But WPA terminated the project for want of finances, and Miller again became jobless. During the period of unemployment, he worked at various places, and finally settled at radio-writing. By then, he had got married. His wife worked in publishing houses in the secretarial section. Gradually his work with radio as script-writer gained momentum, and it made him financially independent.

However, his association with the radio establishment was not enrapturous. He had to work under several constraints. Working under censor restrictions and within a certain time frame was a tedious job for a creative writer. There was no freedom to elaborate the story, develop the character to a genuine limit, and stuff a comprehensive idea in the script. Simplicity of language and non-controversial content were the primary requirement. In just thirty minutes, he had to convey the desired message. However, Miller had got such control over his faculties that he could complete a script just within a day. But, he hated the conditions imposed on his creativity, and the moment he got opportunity, he left radio. And the opportunity came after the success of his first play, *All My Sons*. After getting long-solicited liberty from the radio work, he said in an interview, "I despise radio. Every emotion in a radio script has to have a tag. It's like playing a scene in a dark closet."<sup>xi</sup>

Nevertheless, it was the association with radio that gave Miller fame and financial stability. Working for the Columbia Workshop and Cavalcade of America in 1940s was something noteworthy. And it was here where he brought out some really original scripts, and earned a rich fan-following. The radio plays which became very popular are 'The Pussycat and the Expert Plumber Who Was a Man', 'Grandpa and the Statue', 'The Story of Gus', and 'That They May Win'. Even in radio play, Miller has kept the complex neurotic faculty of man at the core. Plumber's reply to Tom in 'The Pussycat and the Expert Plumber' speaks loud about Miller's pre-occupation with man's neurotic peculiarity:

A cat will do anything, the worst things, to fill his stomach, but a man ... will actually prefer to stay poor because of an ideal. That's why I could never be president, because some men are not like cats. Because some men, some useful men, like expert plumbers, are so proud of their usefulness that they don't need respect of their neighbours and so they aren't afraid to speak.<sup>xii</sup>

Miller's dramatic technique became visible even from radio plays. Radio plays were written for a particular group of audience. They need exquisite imagination on the part of the audience. Therefore, Miller experimented with non-realistic characterization and situation. Use of narrator, change of scenes at quick pace, and disregard for traditional time impediments are found in most of the Miller's plays in more comprehensive and refined way.

Miller's journey, as script and play writer, continued for some time. During this phase, he wrote *The Half-Bridge*, *Montezuma*, and *The Man Who Had All the Luck*. The premiere of *The Man Who Had All the Luck* was organised on November 23, 1944 in Forrest Theatre. The play proved to be a big flop. Except Burton Rascoe of New York World-Telegram, no critic of some repute talked good about the play.

Football injury Miller had suffered during his school days had kept him away from the armed forces. He was greatly disappointed that in the Second World War, the greatest real-life drama of his time, he could work only as observer, and not as a participant. Therefore, he was extremely elated when he received a proposal from Hollywood producer Lester Cowan for collecting data related to the ensuing war for making a motion picture. It was Broadway producer, Herman Shumlin, who had suggested Miller's name as a promising young script-writer to Cowan. The proposed film was to be made on the basis of the first-hand reports, straight from the war-zone, collected in *This Is Your War* by war correspondent, Ernie Pyle. Miller delightfully visited army bases and military installations in order to give authenticity to his data submission. After genuine research, Miller prepared his report and submitted to the producer. Under the able director, William Wellman, film entitled *The Story of G. I. Joe*, one of the most beautiful films on infantryman in World War Two, was made.

Although Miller's role in the entire project was tangential because it was a director's movie, Miller found himself engrossed in the work so much so that he could not dissociate himself from the excitement involved. In order to come out of the trance, he compiled the material, and published it in 1944 with the title *Situation Normal*. The critics took the book in good esteem. They were all unanimous in opining that the entire report was excellent, but they were not appreciative about the author's impressions and ideas that he had stuffed in the report intermittently. Herbert Kufferberg, in *New York Herald Tribune*, December 17, 1944, wrote, "Miller was an excellent reporter... with an eye for the little things that give meaning to the big ones," but his reporting got marred by his perpetual "wondering just how this incident or that soldier can best be worked into." Similar observations were made by Russell Maloney in the *New York Times* just after a week: "Miller is at his best when he is describing actual happenings, and poorest stalking ideas and impressions and trying to come up with the philosophy of the soldier."

The novel received appreciation from all corners. About ninety thousand copies were sold, and Miller got rid of financial worries. Arthur Miller with *Focus* had been accepted by the elite as a promising novelist, and he could have made a future in the world of fiction, but his first love was still drama. Incidentally, one fine evening, he was in casual conversation with a lady who happened to be his relative. During the course of talk, the lady described a real event. There was a family in her neighbourhood. The man of the family used to supply equipment parts to the Army. Once his daughter discovered that her father had supplied faulty materials to the Army at



war time. She was shocked. Utterly perturbed, she reported to the authorities about the wrong-doings of her father, and the entire family suffered. Miller had got the idea for his next play: "I just pick them up here and there," confesses Miller. Later, while introducing his *Collected Plays*, he writes:

All I knew was that somehow a hard thing had entered into me, a crux toward which it seemed possible to move in strong and straight lines. Something was crystal clear to me for the first time since I had begun to write plays, and it was the crisis of the second act, the revelation of the full loathsomeness of an anti-social action.<sup>xiii</sup>

The idea was there in Miller's mind, but he could not transform it into a well-knit, well-structured play. About a couple of years passed by. Meditating upon various causes and effects, "geometry of relationships", and structure of yet-to-be-born play, he prepared six or seven drafts, and decided the title as *The Sign of the Archer*. But, still he remained unsatisfied. He got depressed so much so that he even decided to say good-bye to theatre. But, soon, he realised that he failed because he was giving equal importance to many characters, and, therefore, there was no well-defined centre and a well developed periphery. In particular, the mother pushed the father and the son towards the periphery, which diluted the entire motive. Her neuroticism was overwhelmingly in confrontation with those of the father and the son from equidistance, thus, weakening the intensity of conflict between the father and the son. After a series of revisions, he pushed the mother towards the periphery bringing the relationships between the father and the son at the centre-stage. And he got the desired result. The change in plot necessitated a suitable change in the title. And the play became *All My Sons* focussing on the father's dilemma. Play was, for the first time staged at the Coronet Theater, New York on January 29, 1947. It was produced by Harold Clurman, Walter Fried and Elia Kazan, and directed by Elia Kazan. Ed Begley played the role of Joe Keller, and Arthur Kennedy that of Chris Keller.

Initial reviews of the play were not that of exuberance and appreciation. It was a kind mixed emotions. A majority of critics commented on its copy-book structure and dependence on dramatic devices. However, they appreciated its "dramatic sense, human sense, and moral sense". Meanwhile, New York Drama Critics gave their annual Circle Award to *All My Sons*. It surprised many, particularly when Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* was also in the run for the coveted prize. In spite of the fact that it was a flawed drama on many counts, it ran at the Coronet Theatre for 328 performances.

While *All My Sons* was running successfully, Miller began to work on a new project – a play based on a "love story of working people in an industrial city". Miller had already finalised the title as *Plenty Good Times*. At this very he moved with his wife and two children, Robert and Jane Ellen to Roxbury, Connecticut, where had purchased a few acres of land. At new place, he began work on the new play, but, for reasons known only to the Almighty, his mind could not concentrate on the project and he had to consign the half-cooked material to a desk drawer. Thus, *Plenty Good Times* could never be completed.

*Death of a Salesman* had its roots in an unfinished play which Miller had tried to write when he was at the University of Michigan. Since his university days, the main protagonist, a salesman, had been taking shape only to be born on the pages of a book. He knew this character subconsciously from the time when he worked with his father. Eventually, it appeared as Willy Loman. Miller finished this play in a very short time, because the entire plot was already designed in his mind. He had only to put it on paper. And he did it in short span. Initially, he had the title *The Inside of His Head* for this play, but ultimately he settled down with *Death of a Salesman*.

The story of *Death of a Salesman* illustrates two basic facts associated with Miller's drama most often. Firstly, the main characters are greatly sensitive, volatile, idealistic in thought but tolerant to contamination in their action. They all show a neurotic trend. Secondly, they all strive hard to immortalise them through their sons. Moreover, Miller always tries to keep father-son relationship within the focal range, and wherefrom the main conflict originates. Willy Loman is the main protagonist in *Death of a Salesman*. He is a travelling salesman who has his headquarters at Brooklyn, but his area of work is the entire territory of New England. When the play opens up, he is in his sixties, and exhausted so much so that he can not measure up to the tenuous demand of the profession. His wife, Linda, has always been a source of inspiration for him. But, any how it has entered in to his mind that his life has not been successful. He is more depressed because he thinks that his two sons, Biff and Happy, have not measured up to his expectations. Happy works in a departmental store, and passes his leisure as a playboy. Willy has great with Biff, the other son, but to his utter dismay he finds that he is a pretty thief. The main action of the play begins with Biff's return to his father's house after an interval of many years. During his absence, where he drifted away, nobody knows. With the help of many flashbacks, originating in tempestuous faculties of Willy's innerness, the deterioration of the family-tree is brought to the spectators. Willy has been, throughout his life, driven by a semi-mystical and dogmatic belief in values of life, and he has his own concept of success. As a father, he has always been trying to inculcate his values in his sons. Through various episodes and anecdotes, he teaches his sons about the qualities of a successful salesman. Benjamin Nelson writes:

Willy has spent his life attempting to instill his values into his sons. He has preached his gospel of salesman – a brash personality, a ready smile, a fast joke, and a glittering appearance – is the key to fame and fortune; and fostering this gaudy philosophy in his boys, he has overlooked their weaknesses in the golden past of his grandiose dreams, thus unintentionally but unquestionably paving the way for their ruin.<sup>xiv</sup>

Miller's next play, an adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* was staged on December 28, 1950 at Broadhurst Theatre. Frederic March, Florence Eldridge, and Morris Carnovsky played the main characters. Miller declared that he wrote the play "to demonstrate that Ibsen is really pertinent today."<sup>xv</sup> But the spectators believed that the play failed to do justice to Ibsen. Despite the performance by reputed actors, the play closed the performance after thirty-six shows.

It is the story of a physician and an innovative researcher, Dr. Thomas Stockmann. He is kind-hearted and ever ready to work for the society. He develops mineral baths for the community. In appreciation of his services, the administration appoints him as inspector. Soon, he discovers that waters entering the baths are being contaminated with typhoid germs. Contamination is caused by the waste

released by the nearby tannery. With zeal to work for the social cause, he publishes his findings, and proposes to dismantle the baths and reconstruct them at other place away from the tannery. Incidentally, his brother is the mayor of the town. Doctor tries to convince the mayor, but Mayor Stockmann rejects the idea because of huge expenditure involved in it. The mayor, instead, suggests an alternate plan to keep the baths in operation and let the repairs continue. Even people are managed to favour the mayor's plan. The crowd is instigated to be hostile to the Doctor. The doctor and his family is ostracised by the village, but he swears to continue his struggle for truth and awakening. The protagonist follows the same trend that Miller has set for his other protagonists. Dr. Stockmann is well-meant, but eccentric and rigid in his approach. He has his own parameters for social welfare, and he is ready to face the consequences for his beliefs.

Miller's next play, *The Crucible*, has neurotic hysteria as the main theme. Most of the protagonists are neurotically charged. The idea to pick up a subject related to witch-craft came to Miller's mind when he witnessed the corporate national hysteria of 1950s. It is true that the witch trials of the seventeenth century held at Salem, Massachusetts had its deep impact on his innerness, but events of the 1950s provided a sound basis to his creativity, and *The Crucible* hit the stands.

Miller, already disturbed, went to Salem for on the spot study of one of the darkest episodes in American history. *The Crucible* had its premiere in January, 1953. In general, critics viewed the play through politically-coloured glasses. They levelled diverse charges as leftist, rightist, centralist etc. Howard Fast called the play an allegory about the famous court trial and execution of two accused, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who had been charged of spying in 1950s. Robert Warshow criticised the play in the March 1953 issue of *Commentary* for ignoring the puritan aspect of the Salem trials, and for Miller's "contemptuous lack of interest in the particularities – which is to say, the reality – of Salem trials." Warshow deplored Miller's attempt to overlook the fact that the victims of Salem elected to die not for any material gain or for political rights, but "for their own credit on earth and in heaven...they lived in a universe where each man was saved or damned by himself, and what happened to them was personal."<sup>xvi</sup>

It is indeed fact that the idea of writing *The Crucible* came in to the mind of Miller because of the social and political upsurge in the United States of America in 1950s. However, Miller never opined that McCarthyism of 1950s was nothing but the resurrected form of the witchhunts occurred in 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts. But it can be inferred without any hesitation that *The Crucible* reflects the contemporaneity. At the same time it is "as permanent to equisitorial Spain, the France of Robespierre and Danton, Nazi Germany, and Stalinist Russia as it is to McCarthyite America."<sup>xvii</sup>

Produced by Kermit Bloomgarden and directed by Jed Harris, *The Crucible* was staged for its maiden show on January 22, 1953. Arthur Kennedy and Beatrice Straight played the roles of John Proctor and Elizabeth Proctor respectively. It ran for a respectable number of performances, 197. In addition, it was declared the most remarkable of the year, and got Antoinette Perry and Donaldson awards.

After about a couple years, Miller came out with two plays at a time – *A Memory of Two Mondays* and *A View from the Bridge*. They were staged in Coronet Theatre, Broadway. However, both the plays could win the desired acclaim. Some believed that lack of production quality and poor performance of the actors was responsible for the flop-show of *A Memory of Two Mondays*. For poor show of *A View from the Bridge*, dramatist's failure in presenting a well-nit and well-structured story was believed to be the major reason.

Next assignment was offered to Miller by Combined Artists which, in collaboration with Youth Board of New York City, wanted to produce a film on the work Board had been doing for juvenile gangs in New York. Miller was asked to write the script for the proposed film. For over a week, Miller watched the activities of the juveniles, and studied their frustrations, disappointments, and psyche. He was very much impressed by the stamina and dedication of the juveniles. They generally worked "forty-two hour stretches to head of a gang fight; no time to eat, to sleep, to shave, shot at, stabbed, beaten, arrested, degraded; ending up with broken heads and ulcer... for \$3000 a year."<sup>xviii</sup>

Miller continued to watch the gang's activities, and made notes of his observations. Very soon, he prepared a twenty-five scenario with the title, *Bridge to a Savage World*. It was a mere coincidence that the title was similar to his latest play, *A View from the Bridge*. But it is also true that both works relate the events dealing with the relationship between savagery and civilization. Moreover, both works meditate upon the issue of savagery and pronounce the remedy that communication is the most formidable tool that can be used to humanize the world of teeth and venom.

No sooner did Miller submit his scenario to Combined Artists than reporter Frederick Woltman wrote a venomous article in *New York World-Television* accusing Miller of agent of leftist activism. A few days later, the newspaper wrote an editorial demanding that New York City revoke the contract with the dramatist. However, the Board supported the dramatist as well as the film project.

Unfortunately, owners of film project could sustain the pressure from various corners. Mayor Robert Wagner asked Investigation Commissioner Charles H. Tenney to enquire about the playwright's background. Tenney could not find any serious charges of indulging in leftist activities. Although in his young days, Miller had inclination towards Marxism in 1930s. In 1947, Miller had participated in many communist meetings, and had been a signatory on the statement issued to protest against the government's order declaring Communist party a banned organization. In 1954, he had even been denied passport to travel to Brussels for premiere of his play, *The Crucible*. The findings naturally could have declared anyone else Enemy of the People. But, the mayor declared that nothing incriminatory had been found against the writer. Wagner added that although his previous activities established his sympathy for the leftists, there was no concrete evidence to vindicate the charge. Wagner expressed his belief that the New York Board of Estimate whose approval of the City's contract was essential would permit Combined Artists to continue with the contract. But three powerful members of the Board of Estimate, Brooklyn Borough, President John Cashmore, Bronx Borough, President James J. Lyons, and City Comptroller, Lawrence E. Gerosa refused to allow any association with Miller. A sub-committee was appointed by the Board of

Estimate to look into the matter. The sub-committee strove to convince Miller to tender an apology for his past relationship with leftists but Miller flatly refused abide by the suggestion:

I told the Board that I was not going to genuflect to any newspapermen or howling mob. My attitudes on dictatorship, Nazi and Communist had been established by many essays. I'd signed the customary loyalty oath when obtaining my passport. I was not going to submit myself to any political means test to practice the profession of letters in the United States.<sup>xix</sup>

Miller was greatly disappointed, but much worse was in store for him in the coming years. His married life with Mary Slattery had been facing rough weathers for some time. On June 12, 1956, the marriage was terminated when they took divorce in a Reno divorce court. And, just after seventeen days Miller married Marilyn Monroe, the brightest star on earth of that time. For the first time they had met in 1951, but they got intimate only in 1955 when Monroe moved to New York. On June 29, 1956, they married in a simple ceremony. Everybody was surprised to know about the marriage particularly when Miller was facing problems with the House Un-American Activities Committee. Whosoever knew Miller and Monroe believed that the marriage would not last long. And the news about breaches in the relationship percolating out just about four years after wedding began to vindicate doubts of those who knew them. In the initial days of their married life, Miller applied for a passport, because he wanted to go to England with his bride to make arrangement for the London production of his play, *A View from the Bridge*. Monroe had her own professional reason. The State Department withheld the issuance of the passport on the ground that it had some derogatory information about the writer's ideology, and it asked for an affidavit from the writer.

Meanwhile, Miller received a letter from the House Un-American Activities Committee, which was making enquiries about the misuse of American passports, to remain present before the Committee for some clarifications regarding his previous passports and regarding the application for a new one. Miller accompanied by his counsel, Joseph Rauh, Jr. went to the House Committee at Washington D. C. on June 21, 1956. Miller spoke before the Committee on various issues – his spoilt relationship with Youth Board of New York City, his objection to the Entertainment Industry's blacklisting of the Communists, his solidarity with Howard Fast, a leftist writer, and his broken friendship with Elia Kazan. In the exchange of thought with the Congressman Scherer, Miller raised queries about the authenticity of Smith Act.

Miller was ultimately acquitted. Miller had stood for a cause and suffered. Many years of struggle had made him a real self. Throughout the struggle he stood for something he could have not lived without. In an age when people are being induced and coerced to shed off their identities, Miller stood for something without which nobody remains his own self:

Nobody wants to be a hero...but in every man there is something he cannot give up and still remain himself – a core, an identity, a thing that is summed up for him by the sound of his own name on his own ears. If he gives that up, he becomes a different man, not himself.<sup>xx</sup>

The main protagonist, Bert, of *A Memory of Two Sundays* finds no reason why he should remain alive with meaningless existence. The present situation he is in is awful, but still he attempts to make his existence meaningful. The play is exclusively about hope to get out of the deadening trap of routine and monotony. The protagonist attempts to make out of the trap, although by dubious means. But his effort remains inconclusive and incomplete, and he is left only with the memory of the past. Similar situation is contemplated in Tennessee Williams's *A Glass Menagerie*, where Tom Wingfield finds himself in a meaningless situation, and he attempts to make his life meaningful. He tries to breach the impenetrable wall of monotony and make the life an existence of jollity. He too fails in his attempt, and is forced to escape only with memory of the past. Subsequently, Bert and Tom, each comes back to his past in his memory carrying the treasure of love.

Both the protagonists, Williams's Tom and Miller's Bert, represent their respective creators. Both of them recreate the events related to their respective creator's lives. Tom Wingfield recalls a family squabble which is similar to one occurred in the Williams's family in St. Louis during Depression. Bert works at a warehouse dealing with the automobile parts and reminds the spectators of those days when Miller happened to work at a warehouse for about a year and half. Bert's memory of the warehouse is that of joys, sorrows, difficulties and disillusionments, similar to those of Miller's. Like Miller he too leaves the warehouse leaving behind his friends. He expects some kind of emotional outburst from his companions signifying the fact that his stay in the warehouse has been a meaningful experience to his friends. But they are so engrossed in their personal problems that they do not show any kind of volatile outburst of emotion. Bert's stepping out from one existence into the other remains a non-event.

Miller's next play, *A View from the Bridge*, came in quick succession and opened up on September 29, 1955. Eddie Carbone, an Italian-American porter working at the seaport, is the chief protagonist. He lives in the Red Hook section, Brooklyn. Beatrice, his wife, and Catherine, his niece, also live with him. Eddie has been fatherly figure for Catherine, and has patronised her since her childhood. In her youth she has become a beautiful woman, and Eddie subconsciously begins to love her. There is a perpetual conflict between his overt paternal authority and covert sexual infatuation. While he is split between his responsibilities as a patron and incestuous desire for the girl, two relatives of Beatrice, Marco and Rodolpho, make entry in the country unlawfully. Eddie gives shelter to new entrants. Eventually, Rodolpho and Catherine begin to love one another. When Eddie comes to about their affair, he tries to split them. Eddie's every effort brings them closer and closer. In a fit of anger, he informs the immigration authorities about Rodolpho's illegal entry into the country. Ultimately, Eddie's loss of face in the neighbourhood compels him to challenge Marco for a fight, and during the combat he is killed by Marco.

The protagonist, Eddie, treads on the similar track of neurotic activism. His psycho-sexual behaviour, undoubtedly, puts the play in a bracket different from that Miller's remaining plays are in. But, Eddie is neurotically away from the equilibrium that buttresses the normal individuals. Eddie's subconscious infatuation for Catherine, his niece speaks much about his neurotic abnormality. Furthermore, his lack of sexual interest in his wife and covert homo-sexual feelings for Rodolpho, which surface through his savagely



conducted kiss reveals his psycho-sexual demeanour. However, *A View from the Bridge* continues to follow the trend set by Miller's previous novels, *All My Sons*, *Death of a Salesman*, and *The Crucible*. Like those of the previous plays, *A View from the Bridge* too has a protagonist in Eddie who does not suffer from the problem of psychological vacuity. Instead, like other protagonists, he remains well-knit to his communal lineage. Eddie follows the same trend of committing sin against the society he belongs to which predecessors, Joe Keller and Willy Loman, have set.

Miller's short stories, 'Please Don't Kill Anything' and 'The Misfits' hit the stands at about same time. The first story, 'Please Don't Kill Anything' narrates the story of a man and a woman who are walk along the sea beach. They see some fishermen catching fish with the fishing net. When the fishermen pull back the net from the water, some small unwanted fish are also caught along with the main find. The small unwanted fish are thrown out on the sunny sand only to die for no reason and quite uselessly. Seeing the harrowing sight, the lady feels pity for the helpless fish, and requests her companion to throw the unwanted fish back into the water so that they may get back to life. The man embarrassedly begins to throw fish back into the water to the amusement of the fishermen. At that point of time, a stray dog comes and catches back the fish each time the man throws them back into the sea. The man is irritatingly amused, and describes the lady the predatory facts of life. The basic truth is that life depends on life. For the survival of one life, the other has to die.

The other story 'The Misfits', a humorous one, has Roslyn as the main protagonist. Roslyn requests her fiancée, Gay, not to kill rabbits unnecessarily, and also the wild horses he has been killing only for fun. In the present story, the lady demands her lover to give up something that he possesses – habit or other characteristic. In the first story, 'Please Don't Kill Anything', the lady requested her friend to save some lives which were unnecessarily endangered. There, she did not demand something that was a part of her lover's personality. But here, Roslyn requests him to give up something that is engrained in him.

Both the stories are known for their simplicity and delicacy. Women of both stories are tenacious and determined. The film *The Misfits* is based on both the stories. Its main objective is to present varied points of view on the subject of death. In addition, it does not view death merely as the end of an individual's life. Death, to Miller as enunciated in the stories, carries multiple connotations. It can be an event signifying the end of a country, of a culture, of a dream, of a human relationship, or of an individual's values. On the lowest plain if one tries to visualize, it can even be the death of some misfit animals, such as, misfit horses. It can also be taken as a metaphor symbolizing the death of misfit people in the misfit world.

Arthur Miller had long turbulent years of pain and ignominy. But, the year 1957 brought some cheer in his personal and professional life. He passed some quality in the company of his new wife, Marilyn Monroe. They spent the summer of 1957 at Amagansett, a tiny and remote village closed to Long Island. They enjoyed period of togetherness swimming, fishing, driving, and relaxing through other sports. Monroe had declared that although she was an actress, her husband's work would be the primary profession of the family and means of bread-earning. Miller began to write his next play with the hope that it would be produced in the next few months. But, despite passing away of months together, he could not come out with any new play. On the other side, Monroe's popularity was taking a forward leap with her good performance in the films *The Prince and the Showgirl*, *Bus Stop*, and *Some Like It Hot*. His failure in writing a good play was there in sight even before he married Marilyn Monroe. But continuance of his failure got enlightened to a considerable of period even after his marriage with Marilyn Monroe. Moreover, his increasing involvement in Marilyn's professional activity also prevented him from producing anything worthwhile. At the time of shooting of the film, *The Prince and the Showgirl*, Miller worked as de facto manager of Marilyn Monroe. In the mean time, Marilyn suffered from regular attack of depression and anxiety. Miller was there to take care of her, ignoring his own work. And when he somehow tried to write something, he passed only through dark avenues. He tried to expand the story of 'The Misfits' into a full-fledged novel. He worked on this project, but gave up after some days.

Thus, Miller invested his all energy in providing assistance to his wife. He helped her in choosing the right project, and the leading men opposite her in the films. With every passing day, the joy and excitement of marriage began to fade away. Gradually bitterness in relationship developed. Marilyn began to distrust him, expressed her desire to keep her professional and financial affairs insulated from him. Every additional pressure related to their profession eroded the bond of marriage. Meanwhile, Marilyn passed through the agony of miscarriage, and another attempt to have a child as cementing force between them came to an end. It was her second miscarriage.

In 1960, Miller and Marilyn, along with a team of artists and technicians, had gone to Nevada for outdoor shooting of a film. Marilyn was in the lead role. Ghost-like appearance of the small town, Dayton, seemed to be symbolizing the darkening evening of Millers's relationship. During the shooting Marilyn suffered massive attack of depression, and was hospitalised for a week. Any how she completed the film, but by the time film was released their marriage had reached the point of imminent termination. Ultimately, they declared 'amicable estrangement', and, in November, 1960, they got divorced.

Arthur Miller married a thirty-eight year old Australian-American woman, Ingeborg Morath on February 17, 1962. Morath was a freelance photographer. Daughter of research chemist, Morath had got her education in Berlin, Budapest and Vienna. In Vienna, she had served as a journalist and critic. She had also been the Australian bureau chief of *Heute*, an American magazine. She was married to an English journalist, but the marriage did not survive for long and terminated in 1954. Meanwhile, Morath had become a professional photographer. During her assignment as the photographer of the rehearsal stint, she had met Miller. After a month and half of their marriage, Morath gave birth to a daughter, named, Rebecca.

On the other hand, Marilyne could not come out of the trance of her character in 'The Misfits' and died in her mansion on August 5, 1962. Miller did not attend her funeral. When a reporter asked Miller to summarise his life with Marilyn, he said in a tone of helplessness:



How can I capsulize Marilyn? The more you know about people the more complex they are to you. They're all writing about her and they can't because they don't know anything about her. They're writing rubbish. If she were simple, it would have been easy to help her.<sup>xxi</sup>

For the last few years Miller wanted to write a play about "the present day, about people who lived through the events of the thirties and forties, and are now face to face with their lives in a world they never made. I am trying to define what a human being should be, how he can survive in today's society without having to appear to be a different from what he basically is."<sup>xxii</sup>

Robert Whitehead, the creator and organizer of Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center, made it public in October 1962 that Miller had completed a new play, and his company would produce it. However, the play was still in its preliminary stage. Anyhow on January 23, 1964, the premiere of his latest play, *After the Fall*, was arranged for the public show. It was the first play of Miller after a hiatus of nine years. The play was received with mixed comments. There were some who accused Miller of exploiting his relationship with Marilyn Monroe. Everybody while commenting on the play said something personal about Miller. Naturally, the play received great appreciation by some, but, at the same time, it was deplored intensely by some others. Of course, the review of Howard Taubman was free from any comment on the autobiographical elements of the play. Writing in *New York Times*, Taubman requested the readers to appreciate the enthusiasm of the writer in Miller who made his worth again proved resoundingly with *After the Fall*. Normal Nadel admired the "fine structure" and "searing power" of the play. He wrote in *World-Telegram & Sun*, New York, "It will be a long time before another playwright will reveal more about the form and content of man's self-examination."<sup>xxiii</sup> Richard Watts called the play "impressive", and appreciated it for having "powerful and striking" scenes. At the same time, he admonished it for its "waywardness" and "self-indulgence". Again he criticised it for having "an air of self-exculpation that grows a little uncomfortable."<sup>xxiv</sup> Theophilus Lewis praised the play for its "electrifying experience". But John McCarten wrote in *New Yorker* that *After the Fall* was "desultory" and "garrulous". According to *Time*, Miller's *After the Fall* appeared to be sending out an advisory to all that "when life becomes unbearable, find a new woman and start a new life."<sup>xxv</sup> But the bitterest denunciations of the play came from Richard Gilman, who wrote in the *New York Herald Tribune's* Book Review on May 6, 1964 that play was a "disastrous failure". He opined that it was a conscious endeavour of the playwright to justify himself and his erroneous actions of the past. He, further, added that Miller was falsely moulded in the frame "a god on the strength of one play", *Death of a Salesman*, and he has been striving hard since then to remain erect on his imagined citadel as a "playwright of passion and ideas". However, the worst criticism came from Robert Brustein who wrote in *New Republic*, "*After the Fall* is a three-and-one-half hour breach of taste, a confessional autobiography of embarrassing explicitness, in which Mr. Miller is dancing a spiritual striptease while the band plays *mea culpa*." Brustein, further, added that Miller seemed to make his personal experience of follies and fairness a public affair, but he could end up with "a tabloid gossip, an act of exhibitionism, which makes us all voyeurs"<sup>xxvi</sup>.

It is no doubt that *After the Fall* fictionalizes some well-known facts about the personalities and inter-personal relationships. For instance, Quentin, the male protagonist, appears to be quite similar to Miller himself; Maggie matches the late Marilyn Monroe; and a host of other characters exhibiting mannerisms of the living individuals. But other plays of Miller such as *All My Sons*, *Death of a Salesman*, *A memory of two Mondays* exhibit similar trend, in which fictitious characters resemble some living individuals.

A story narrated by an acquaintance 1942 had been taking round in Miller's mind since then, and he wanted to write a play based on that story whenever occasion arose. According to the story, his acquaintance, a Jew, was, one day, picked up from the street of Vichy, France and brought to police station for some questioning. In the police station, he was simply asked to wait for his turn, and questions were asked. He was surprised at his incarceration, because the political situation in Vichy, France was not that dangerous to lives of Jews. The government had not enforced racial laws despite Nazi influence. Jewish refugees were allowed to live safe in the Unoccupied Zones in the southern territories. There were other people in the police station, and one by one they were called in for some clarifications. There was rumour all around that Gestapo were planning to annihilate Jewish community from the region. He was scared of almost certain danger to his life. Finally he was called in. He stood alone in the middle of the room awaiting the axe of death to fall. In a moment, a policeman came, put in his hand his pass to escape. The story had touched Miller's inner chord and lingered over there for years together. Miller writes:

And he appears most clearly and imperatively amid the jumble of emotions surrounding the Negro in this country, and the whole unsettled moral problem of the destruction of the Jews in Europe.<sup>xxvii</sup>

However, a full-fledged play could materialize only after the publication and staging of *After the Fall*. Miller wrote the 1942-story in dramatic form under that title just in little over a month, and titled it as *Incident at Vichy*. In a world of failed humanity, the play strove to explore the relationship man maintains with good and evil, negligence and dutifulness, split and togetherness. The play was the last project Miller completed for the Lincoln Center Repertory Theater. After that he, along with Robert Whitehead and Elia Kazan, left Lincoln Theater. For the first time, the play was staged on December 3, 1964. It was produced by Harold Clurman, and the prominent performers were Joseph Wiseman as Leduc, the Jewish psychiatrist, David Wayne as Prince Von Berg, his Catholic benefactor, and Hal Holbrook as a German officer.

Miller's next play *The Price* was premiered at Morosco Theater on February 7, 1968. It proved to be the most acclaimed play after *Death of the Salesman*. There were certainly few who criticised the structure and message of the play, but majority of critics appreciated technique, structure, and characterization of the play. Clive Barnes, while writing in *New York Times*, opined that *The Price* is "one of the most engrossing and entertaining plays that Miller has ever written"<sup>xxviii</sup>. The play ran for about a year in New York, and it received accolades in London. It is true that *The Price* has complicated story-line and characterization. In structure, it is similar to *All My Sons*, and its themes resemble, in some respect, with *After the Fall*.

The story of *The Price* enunciates the hot and cold relationship of Victor, a fifty-year-old policeman and his brother, Walter Franz, a doctor. Victor was an intelligent student in his youth but he left college education only to assist his father who had gone bankrupt. On the other hand, Walter did not allow any domestic problem to deter his education, and became a successful doctor. Even after becoming a doctor, he remained confined to him without caring much for his father and brother. Naturally, relation between the two brothers was far from cordial. Many years passed off, and the two brothers meet only when Victor calls his brother to assist him in disposing his parents' personal belongings of. The moment they meet, one in police uniform and the other in his usual coat, old hostility between them comes on the surface. Even petty issue they began to quarrel while Victor's wife, Esther, and Gregory Soloman, an elderly Jew involved in furniture business looked on helplessly. During the quarrel, they went on disclosing raw realities about each other. At the end, they find more naked, more learnt and more worldly.

Precision is the foremost quality of *The Price*. Dialogue falls into the ears of audience with force and sensibility. But perfect structuring and penetrative conversation have many become its weakness.

In fine, *The Price* is a flawed play in many respects. But it is domineering in its human quality. The characters are neurotic, erratic and somewhat eccentric, but it always remains on the human plain. Miller has created human beings in their fullest meanings. Miller seems to be deeply sympathetic but least attached to the characters he has created.

Miller had written a short story entitled 'Monte Sant Angelo' in 1951. It was a story of two young Americans, Appello and Bernstein. They go to Italy in search of the living and dead members of Appello's family. Appello is emotionally charged about his journey to Italy, but Bernstein is reluctant of Appello's findings. One noon, they were taking lunch in a restaurant. Bernstein sees a physically strong Italian who is also eating there. After the stranger completes his meal, he takes a freshly baked loaf of bread and ties it carefully with the bundle he already has. Bernstein finds similarity in the stranger's mannerism with that of a Jew. He concludes that the stranger is a Jew, and shares his inference with Appello. However, the stranger is found to be a non-Jew, as he does not even know what really a Jew is. His is, of course, derived from that of Moses, and it is his family tradition to return home from any enterprise before sunset. All these facts convince the two Americans that he is certainly a Jew.

After the man goes away, Bernstein, in a fit of excitement, requests Appello to continue his search for his family members and their tombs. The same day, they find the tombs of Appello's ancestors. Bernstein is overjoyed to find his friend's heritage and perpetuity of ancient legacy.

Miller's sympathy for Jewishness and his pride as an inclusive member of the community has surfaced in the story most overtly. Miller expresses his faith in a surviving Jew who has lost his roots, but keeps the memory of his vestigial heritage deep in his innerness. In *Burnstein*, he finds a Jew who, cursed with his dislocated identity, gets back to his roots and to a sense of belonging to a heritage. Miller does not only keep Jewishness at the core of the story, but he allows the message eliciting from it to spread over the entire body of his work.

Miller's drama stands against the ethos of inverted romanticism of contemporary genre, and presents a substantial format that shows concern for the life within life. His drama addresses the "world beyond the skin." Through his play, Miller does not propound an ideology or a thesis, but his appears to be looking for the fulcrum balancing the social and psychological pans, and the outer and the inner rings formulated in the mind of man.

Miller's strong commitment to break norms and move beyond the trodden territory is followed by his confidence in man and in man's strength to take up responsibility. From his numerous plays such as *The Misfits*, *After the Fall*, *Incident at Vichy*, and *The Price*, it is clear that Miller is not averse to absurdity and existential aloneness of contemporaneity. From the neurotic trends that Miller's protagonists exhibit, it appears that Miller has proclivity to dramatize the absurdist elements that hibernate in human personality. He seems to abide by the parameters William I. Oliver formulated while commenting on the absurdist writers of present era.

Arthur Miller had harrowing experience in the army training camps which he visited in 1944 to collect requisite material for a proposed film. All that horror was going on in the camps for no valid reason. It was all absurd churning out nothing sane.

## 2. Conclusion

That is why there is always a possibility of something sane to emerge in his work. Being rebellious in his approach, Miller continues to explore the pros and cons of determinism and freedom to choose, culpability and accountability, negligence and dutifulness through the stage-craft that, otherwise, continually sings requiem. His meditation on accountability and the spectrum of freedom of choice, in fact, challenges the engulfing banality of theatre which considers man as a livestock imprisoned in his frailty and feebleness only fit for thrashing. Miller's characters are known for their neurotic effervescence, but they are also known for their ability to create history. They are, undoubtedly, affected by their neighbourhood, but they are also potentially sound enough to affect their surroundings.

Unlike tragic protagonists of Thomas Hardy's fiction, Miller's protagonists do not rejoice in despair and breast-thrashing. At the same time, they do not indulge in sloganeering and revolting against the establishment. When theatre is so volatile because of anger, frustration and juvenile criminality, Miller shows considerable faith in aesthetic and civilizing prowess of the stage. He has a sense of purpose, and an ability to transform the evil into considerate empathiser.

Miller has always something to convey, and so has his protagonist. Very often his protagonist adopts the hat of a preacher and begins to sermonize. In addition, Miller has polemic opinion about the existing theatre, and has much to suggest, of course, through his protagonist. As a result, his characters have natural predilection to indulge in long conversations.

It does not mean that Miller is a pamphleteer or an advocate of an ideology, and uses drama as an instrument to get on to the desired end. There are many plays which are known for their sheer dramatic beauty. No doubt, his play has always something to suggest, and even his structurally most perfect plays are aimed at civilizing and refining the existing manners.

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