Chapter I

Introduction
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

........... Drama is based on life, but it is selected and made harmonious. It presents the moods of our minds and hearts abstracted and placed in an intensified isolation. (Theory of Drama 231)

In the modern drama of Ideas where a number of theories had to be propounded and explained, action became slowly and frequently interrupted. The modern researchers in the field of psychology helped the dramatist in the study of the "soul" for the expression of which they extensively use symbols. By means of symbolism the dramatist could raise the dark and even sordid themes to artistic levels.

With the treatment of actual life the drama became more and more a drama of ideas, sometimes veiled in the main action, sometimes didactically set forth. The modern play became essentially the drama of disillusion, for it stripped life of false sentiment and revealed ugliness and it became a previous human document presenting a living picture of human experience. The modern playwright exposed hypocrisy, pulled down old idols from their high pedestals and rebuked the ruling gods. The characters in modern plays are constantly questioning, restless and dissatisfied. Young men struggle to throw off the trammels of Victorian prejudice.
Realism is the most significant quality in modern drama. The main trend in the drama of the early twentieth century was a craze for realism and naturalism. Naturalism is a description of style and realism of content. The Post-war generation of men and women started the demand for 'reality above all things!' They demanded that dramatists should show them 'life' and the theatre was not an 'escape' for them.

... a drama is simply an excerpt from life. That is to say, the aim of the true dramatist ought to be the providing on the stage of as faithful a replica as may be of a scene which either has actually occurred or has been conceived in such terms as to make it life like. (25)

The dramatists of the realistic school have brought real life in their plays with all its sordid ugliness. They do not take us to distant lands of Illyria or to the forest of Arden but keep us well-rooted to the world of real life. They deal with problems of all kinds. For example, the problems of marriage, justice, law and administration and strife between capital and labour. Not only is the subject matter of these modern plays taken from real life, but the machinery through which the subject matter is presented is also realistic. There is the presence of natural acting and realistic dialogues in these realistic plays. In order to give the air of realism to their works, the dramatists provide elaborate stage settings and scenes Miller Comments:
I (Arthur Miller) was looking for the world that would be perfect. I think it necessary that I do that if I were to develop myself, as a writer. . . . I am not satisfied of this. I accept my life. . . . What I sought to find from without I subsequently learned must be created within. (Introduction to Psychology 60)

To a greater extent than most, perhaps, Arthur Miller’s dramas have always been a reflection of his life. His personal experiences have shaped his political and philosophical convictions. His need to understand himself and the life around him is the generating force behind his plays.

Arthur Miller’s plays have an organic unity. Each play grows out of earlier ones or to return to familiar themes. Collectively his plays reveal his efforts to confront and find some intelligible meaning to the world witnessed by him. If this attempt has sometimes led to disillusionment, it has never led to defeat.

It ought to be emphasized that Arthur Miller is fully aware of the three distinct and characteristic elements of excellence, the presence of which can be discerned in varying degrees in his plays particularly in All My Sons and Death of a Salesman. They are matter of presentment, manner of presentment and the capacity to promote aesthetic bliss. Arthur Miller as the fully equipped professional dramatist provides these three elements of excellence in his art products.
Yet again, excellences of thought, and of harmony, and of form are connected with excellence of character. And drama has to serve as the vehicle of the truths of life and the truths of morality. And Arthur Miller’s plays, particularly *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*, meet these requirements. In Arthur Miller’s plays there is the fusion of the subjective and objective aspects of reality. At one level Arthur Miller concerns himself with the objective point of view and reproduces the elements of reality without his mind transference on to the reality that he witnesses. At another level he writes from a subjective point of view and traces the process by which the material that he sees is converted by his mind into an idea or form and is expressed in the medium of drama appropriately, adequately, admirably and most powerfully appealing to the imagination of the spectator.

This accounts for the acknowledged autobiographical nature in his plays. Although most of his dramas are based on an external source (overheard story, novel, published memoir), they become translated in the course of composition into something personal. Arthur Miller’s assertions in this regard are worth studying one in juxtaposition to the other. The first argument of Arthur Miller runs thus, “The writer who wants to describe life must describe his own experiences” (After The Fall XIV 81). The second assertion of Arthur Miller reads thus, “The best work that anybody ever writes is the work that is on the verge of embarrassing him. Where he puts himself on the line” (Psychology 73).
Bur Kenneth Rowe holds on to a different view. He argues that the impulse to write a play entirely out of oneself is a sign of weakness or of the slackening of dramatic imagination and should be sternly suppressed. The better method is to begin with a good plot. Kenneth Rowe’s contention is as follows:

It makes no difference what (that plot) is or where (the author) finds it. Let him (the author) present the story, translate it, if necessary, in terms of a background and kind of people he knows and understands. Then let him develop the play earnestly and sincerely in truth to the characters and to life as he sees it. (52)

But then it must be acknowledged that in the case of Arthur Miller there is the blending of subjectivism with objectivism. Yet again it is the fusion of craft with content. Not one is sacrificed for the other. There is a balanced fusion of subjectivism, objectivism, Gestalt – form, content, structure and organization tropes and figures, and his strong social, and political commitments, and his responsibilities in a complex society, all in balanced proportion.

Clear thinking and great originality mark the creative art products of Arthur Miller. Yet again, his literary products are qualified by contextual relevance, structural finesse, and organizational tightness, and verbal brilliance, and artistic control.

At this juncture, it is stressed that this thesis indisputably identifies Arthur Miller as the outstanding and remarkable artistic genius who has contributed
immensely to the growth, strength, and relevance of American Literature, and by extension to World Literature.

It is precisely because of Arthur Miller’s sound sense – *phronesis* – ethical stature – *arête* – and benevolence – *eunoia* – and by his art products being marked by depth and clarity of vision that he occupies the first shelf of American Literature. Furthermore, Arthur Miller’s plays particularly *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman* gain lasting value mainly because he reflects on the problems and issues of life, which are universally experienced by all in all ages in the past and also in the years to come.

By introducing humanistic concerns and universals Arthur Miller ensures lasting value and quality to his *Oeuvres*. As such he has grown into a great artist of significance, relevance, and consequence. In his accent on *Gestalt*, Arthur Miller merits a close, and critical, and analytical study. He concentrates on the generic form, which is fiction. Arthur Miller, as stated earlier, realizes the importance of balancing the form against the content. In other words, he does not sacrifice content for form.

An art object like all other objects has two factors – form and content. As to the problem of mutual relation between these two factors, there are two contesting groups of aestheticians.

According to one group form is fundamental. This group holds on to the viewpoint that form is art. And therefore in such an art subject matter or content
is not very important. Art can be made without looking at content, that is, content has nothing to do with art proper.

It is argued that art is independent of the thoughts and ideas of the artist. Therefore, the work of art is viewed as a detached object. It is a theory of art from which the subject or the artist is excluded. The aestheticians of this group fail to recognize the fact that art is successful to the extent it expresses a particular idea. The other group places the accent on content. What is of primary importance is content. The value of crafted art depends on the gravity of the ideas.

But Arthur Miller takes a balanced and a synthetic view. To him form and content are inseparable. Abstraction of form from content or content from form implies an abstract theory of art, which should be replaced by a concrete one in which form and content make a pattern or synola – artistic whole. Incidentally, the literature of Arthur Miller speaks directly to the mind and heart of the reader. It is precise because ideas or mental pictures are the material of this dramatist.

In representing reality Arthur Miller is absolutely limited by the very conditions of the art of writing and by the elements of drama, to project the mental aspects of the external existence, which he portrays. In fine, Arthur Miller’s literary products reproduce external reality in its mental aspect. He employs the representation of the objective aspects of reality to assist in the presentation of this mental aspect. But then literature is not altogether objective, for there is a blend of the subjective element.
In other words, the literary products of Arthur Miller are mainly objective in character but there is a controlled infusion of subjectivism in his objective representation of life that he witnesses around his own self in his period of life. Arthur Miller firmly believes that his mind transference is of real value and is of equal importance to objective reportage. As such, one detects Arthur Miller’s mind transference in his literary products.

The object of Arthur Miller is not merely to be intelligible, but also that his representations are more than clear and distinct. With this in mind he desires to make his ideas arouse in the reader or viewer vividly the feeling and thought that he is experiencing the true objective impressions produced by the physical originals of these ideas.

In this context, Arthur Miller takes into serious consideration while creating dramas of purpose and senses the following:

1. Subjective beauty, or the faculties to which man owes his consciousness of beauty,

2. Objective beauty, or the qualities, which respectively make an action, a thought, a person or a material object, beautiful,

3. The nature of art, or the processes by which the beautiful in real existences is reproduced, and

4. The means and therefore the aim, which respectively belong to drama.
Yet again, the accent that this creative genius places is on high seriousness of absolute sincerity, and as such to present the greatest number of greater ideas. It is with such a perspective on the art of writing that one assesses the merits of Arthur Miller as a creative artist. In fact, he projects himself as the representative and perfect spokesperson of the women and men of his time.

In fact, a work of art according to Arthur Miller is a form-content complex. For it is the means of expression of a particular idea of the artist. Content by itself can neither enrich the art nor form by itself brings about that enrichment. The success of a work of a drama depends on the harmony between the two. When something is called creation it implies both the idea and the expression of the idea, two taken together.

In connection with the relation between form and content one has to bear in mind the fact that content by itself is not something fixed. It is not a solid crystal. In fact, content is always in the process of becoming. It becomes what it is with the development of form. Content is content because of form in which it resides. In fact, content achieves its distinctive feature only when it is cast in a particular form. What Arthur Miller emphasizes is that what is called a great form is nothing but a great idea, and a great idea is nothing but the form of the great or lofty life, which is the result of the all round development of the personality of the artist.

Thus, both content and form are not something static. They are dynamically related to each other. In intellectual field, a particular subject matter can
be transferred from one place to another as it is. Sometimes the subject appears brighter when taking form the original, it is put in different context. Here thought is thought. It is fixed. But when it becomes content of art it cannot be transferred.

Content cannot be separated from the form, which supports it. Content and form are related to each like mind and body. Content refers to the internal factor in contrast with form, which refers to external fact. Form includes medium, technique, aids, tools, all that goes for externalization of mental fact. Here too, according to Arthur Miller the inner and the outer are intrinsically connected.

In fact, the aesthetic theory, which Arthur Miller holds, is a humanistic theory. Any divine involvement or any supra-mundane reference has been completely ruled out by the artist, Arthur Miller. An artist is a man like any other man having a human history behind. Man is the beginning and end of creative process. A work of art is always some perceptible object to be enjoyed and appreciated by some human observer.

Moreover, Arthur Miller takes all the writing care at his disposal to see to it that the structure is of a balanced and perfect manner and that the organization is tightly well knit, without any loose ends. Yet again, Arthur Miller places the accent, in a balanced manner, on the elements of drama and the rhetorical requirements, which overlap one another. There is the proper description of the
milieu, Zeitgeist, and the race. It ought to be stressed that Arthur Miller is a technical virtuoso. He is bestowed with the talent to employ the literary tools and devices with functional valuations and variations.

Arthur Miller’s Weltanschauung is accurate and authentic for it is based on his keen observation and perfect receptivity, and power of retention and his brilliant brain to reproduce all that he witnesses with camera-eye like precision. Arthur Miller captures as it were the very pulse of the present world, which has witnessed two Global Wars, the Wall Street Crash – the Great depression – the anomie – and the great accent placed on materialism. In fact the merchant in man reigns supreme.

That is precisely why men and women are conscious of earning more dollars, and with this in mind are acutely conscious of spending even fractions of seconds to earn and hoard more. As such values of life, moral and ethical standards take a descending curve and suffer a downward dip.

Two statements, one introduced by Neil Carson and the other by N. S. Pradhan, are examined one in juxtaposition to the other for they argue to the point and they are worth mentioning here. Firstly Neil Carson asserts:

The crash of 1929 and the Depression, which followed it were the major influences on the playwright’s slowly developing view of life. Not only did they come close to destroying his father, who never completely recovered his financial position, but they put serious
strains on the young Miller's relationship with other members of his family. The relative poverty to which they had been reduced meant that sacrifices were called for and every desire to place self-realization above family solidarity implied a fundamental betrayal. (4-5)

Secondly N.S. Pradhan argues that the economic crisis of 1930 rendered hundreds of thousands of people jobless and frustrated. The old faith in America being a land of opportunity stood shattered for the first time. For the impressionable young Miller, this period of crisis was a great education. It was his experience of the Depression, which gave him a life-long awareness of social injustices and degradation that comes with the loss of moral values (Introduction 8).

The simple truth is that money is not everything in life. Arthur Miller quite convincingly in his plays All My Sons and Death of a Salesman explodes the craze for money and the Success Story. Incidentally, family relationships suffer a serious jolt because of the concentration on money. Therefore, because of the craze for money and the dollar spinning spree individuals drift away from human values.

On the familial ground it is human relationships, which have suffered adversely because of the accent on material side and animalistic side of life. And it is money first and everything else becomes quite secondary or tertiary in value. Consequentially everyone suffers. This is the main burden of Arthur Miller’s All My Sons and Death of a Salesman.
And Arthur Miller concentrates on the psychic angle of his characters that suffer from the mental crises passed through by them. The family relationship has touched an unhealthy low because of the craze for money, and the beastly animalism in the characters. There is the stress on a life that is rooted in a mechanical and daily dull routine. The tempo of life is one of a fast phase and it is fast living and nothing else. Therefore, the tragedy of men and women are that they have lost their self-respect, honor, and dignity, and as a consequence they lose their separate and distinct individuality.

In such a context, notwithstanding the phenomenal material gains and high standard of living, men and women suffer from mental crises and as a result of the persistent psychic strains and stresses, turns into neurotic case studies.

Incidentally, through his effective way of describing the scene of action and time of action, Arthur Miller evokes the right responses and correct emotions. But the descriptions do not root themselves at the level of emotions and physicality. On the other hand the power of evoked emotions strengthen the promotion of the next level of intellect and finally the higher level of moral and spiritual thinking.

Arthur Miller’s art products, All My Sons and Death of a Salesman enable the perceptive and critically oriented reader to detect the clarity of his vision, range, depth, scope, and dynamism of his writing. In fact, through his literary products he projects himself as the most distinguished dramatist of the post Second World War period. Thus, by applying his ingenuity, the zeal for revision,
conscious and painstaking craftsmanship, committed art, clarity of vision, extensive reachable nature, significance, relevance, and consequence, and with the richest and varied imagination, Arthur Miller through his plays, particularly through *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman* enjoys the reputation of an outstanding dramatist.

In fact, Arthur Miller is endowed with immense creative powers and heightened sensibility, and clarity of vision and rich imaginative capacity and writing talents and language power. It ought to be recorded that Arthur Miller is one of the greatest story tellers of all times. He has great inventive capacities and supreme technical mastery and as such could alter the very conception and execution of the literary form, drama.

Arthur Miller takes a humanistic conception of creativity. And creativity is essentially a human process. By human process it means that artistic creation does not take any divine existence either as a source or goal of the work. The whole process is to be referred to man as human being. Creative work starts with man and ends with man, and that man is again a total man, a concrete man. This serves as a convenient parameter to gauge the range, scope, artistic creativity and purpose sense in the dramas of Arthur Miller. In fact, it admirably and adequately qualifies his mind and art. Arthur Miller is a rare combination of an artist and an aesthetician, whose aestheticism is rooted in his living experiences, thoughts, and feelings as a dramatist, and as a great creative artist.
The flawless triumph of Arthur Miller’s dramas lies in his creative ability to give expression to adequately and admirably to his feelings, thoughts, and experiences in his literary products, and invest them with the balanced proportions, symmetry, perfection, cohesion, order and unity. The observation of William O’Connor is that the society becomes the work of art (Age of Criticism 126) and it is a pointer to the proper understanding and appreciations of Arthur Miller’s plays, particularly *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*.

Moreover, two more assertions of Austin Warren deserve to be examined in conjunction with the assertions already quoted in this regard. Austin argues that literature can be used as a social document and literature can be made to yield the outlines of social history and literature is simply a mirror of life, and thus, obviously a social document (Theory 105). Austin Warren’s other contention is:

The most immediate setting of a work of literature, we shall then recognize, is its linguistic and literary tradition, and this tradition in turn is encompassed by a general cultural “climate”. Only far less directly can literature be connected with concrete economic, political, and social conditions. Of course, there are interrelationships between all spheres of human activities. (110)

It ought to be stressed that Austin Warren fails not to realize the validity of the argument that literature and society lie intertwined.
Thus, based on the assertions of Harry Levin, Austin Warren, and William O'Connor, the plays of Arthur Miller are real purposive art, and they succeed in achieving a reach that transcends time and space. In this context, the observation of Terry Eagleton is relevant here:

To write well is more than a matter of "style"; it also means having at one's disposal an ideological perspective, which can penetrate to the realities of man's experience in a certain situation. (Marxism 27)

Arthur Miller appreciates the truth that mere content cannot make the true object of art. It is the form, which lifts it to the level of art. Thoughts and imagination of the artist's mind are to be expressed to make an art-object. But the execution of imagination in the form of actual creation is not sheer whim on the part of the artist. When an artist is inspired, he cannot but express his thoughts. Every artist, as a creator, has something in him, which demands expression. There is also another necessity. The artist's business is not over by externalizing his thoughts, but he is also to communicate his thoughts to others.

Thus, in order that a work of art can be created, the artist must have in him certain unexpressed emotions and have the urge to express and communicate them. Furthermore, creativity not only springs from human nature but also deals with the human nature. The ultimate subject matter of true artistic creation is the story of man.
Drama to Arthur Miller carries the history of realization of man. Creativity moves in and around man. Even when Arthur Miller is referring to nature it is not mere physical nature, but empirical reality related to human relationship. That which satisfies our personality with manifestations that make our life rich and stimulates our imagination in their harmony of forms, colors, and sounds and movements. It is not that world which vanishes into abstract symbols behind its own testimony to science, but that which lavishly displays its wealth of reality to our personal self having its own perpetual reaction upon human nature.

In his humanistic interpretation of creativity, Arthur Miller and Tolstoy come close to each other. To Tolstoy like Arthur Miller creation is an essential aspect of life and is one of the means of intercourse between men and men. To Tolstoy art is not art unless it is taken as one of the conditions of human life.

Drama is not as the metaphysicians say the manifestation of some mysterious idea of beauty of God; it is not, as the aesthetic physiologists say, a game in which man lets off his excess of stored up energy; it is not the expression of man’s emotion by external signs, it is not the production of pleasing objects and above all, it is not pleasure, but it is a means of union among men joining together in the same feeling and indispensable for the life and progress towards well being of humanity.

Arthur Miller argues that creativity is in the human nature and man becomes a true man through his creation. Man as the creator is his best identity.
In his literary products Arthur Miller acknowledges the truth that there are three fundamental drives in man. They are love for knowledge, love for power or strength, and the love for artistic creation. These three tendencies work in their own way and development of human personality depends on the harmonious working of the three.

When man comes in the world, he is a stranger here. The world is yet an unknown and unrelated one. But gradually through cognition, volition, and affection, he gets himself acquainted with the world around him. There is reason in him and that is why he is not satisfied with what he gets. The world around him stands as a great interrogation.

Man’s history is the record of the different attempts to answer these questions. When knowledge is attained, when acquaintance with the world increases, man wants to apply it for some practical achievement. The love of power or strength is also constantly pressing on man. As such he activates himself to exert his influence over nature. Man applies the knowledge acquired by reason for his practical interest. Man thus builds a house to live in, or constructs a bridge to cross a river. Out of the same urge man also proceeds to conquer nature. With the help of scientific and technological knowledge, man controls nature.

But these two impulses, knowledge and action aim at purpose. Man’s knowledge, and man’s action, are guided by some utilitarian consideration. They are termed as purpose-oriented activities. But the third basic drive, the drive
for creativity, is of a quite different nature. It proceeds without calculation. It is not a purposeful activity in the ordinary sense of the term. The spring of creativity is not to acquire knowledge or to acquire any material prosperity or comfort.

Arthur Miller refuses to attach any material prosperity or any other material purpose, or material comfort to creativity in the ordinary sense of the term. The function of creativity, according to Arthur Miller, is to give joy. Creativity establishes a relation of joy with the world. As man needs food and shelter, he needs joy. Our aesthetic sense turned the world, which is otherwise cold and dry, into a world of joy and beauty. The goal towards which Arthur Miller’s aesthetic sense moves is joy.

The aesthetic sense is gradually making this world a joyful one. By knowledge the mind will spread over the whole world, by action the power will spread over the whole world, and by the aesthetic sense my joy will spread over the whole world. This is the goal of manhood. In other words, to be man means to have the world as knowledge, as power, and as joy.

In fine, Arthur Miller has explained all the problems of creativity from this humanistic point of view. It is true, of course, that sometimes contradictory statements are found in his writings. But, they are apparent and not real. For the creative process is a living process, and to grasp the ultimate meaning contradictory views, like thesis and antithesis, do appear.
At this point, the pointed observation of Christopher Bigsby is worth mentioning here for it argues the point how the American dramas particularly plays such as Arthur Miller’s *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman* have the power to project the present and engage the mind of the reader and the viewer and generate thought-processes, and the interesting piece of criticism as follows:

Drama has always had the power to engage the present in a way that is less true of other genres. Unlike the novel it speaks in the present tense, and the sense of shared experience, which derives from this makes it (American Drama) a sensitive instrument for plotting changes in cultural pressure, for responding to changing ideological, social and aesthetic moods. It is this characteristic, which makes it so valuable for the cultural critic, as it quite literally dramatizes the tensions and displays the public and private face of society. (American Quarterly 33)

In fact, the serious academic study of American Drama does not neglect this aspect of Arthur Miller’s contribution, which rises to a high level of academic seriousness. And American Theatre has produced in Arthur Miller a genuinely original talent. In his hands American Drama has resolved into an art with all complexities, intellectual density and attraction.

Yet again, Arthur Miller expresses accurately enough the liberal anguish and romantic alienation, which have to typify the present day world. His plays,
particularly *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*, project a sense of social oppression. He says society is reaching out to crush the individual, and the city threatening his very existence. Arthur Miller is, in fact, unavoidably America’s poet of guilt. He gives considerable attention to the theme of guilt in his play, *All My Sons*. His concern with guilt concedes the power of the past over the present in a way, which relates his work at times to Ibsen, whom he greatly admired and whose work he both adopted and utilized.

It becomes necessary to examine the critical assessment of Neil Carson at this point of discussion:

Arthur Miller is one of the three or four leading playwrights of the American theatre. Some dismiss him a little more than a disciple of Ibsen; others cite him as a penetrating critic of American society and an important innovator in the theatre. Some critics calls his work ‘bloodless’, while others admire the subtlety of his characterization. There is disagreement, too, about whether Miller’s dramatic vision is profound or superficial, clear-eyed or sentimental. (Arthur 2)

But then there is general acceptance about the great contribution made by Arthur Miller to the growth and pre-eminence of American Literature. Miller’s carefully crafted plays look a little musty. There is a certain preachy quality in some of his plays that tends to make some audiences or readers uncomfortable.
It is extraordinarily difficult, therefore, to respond to Miller’s plays on all levels at once, to give full weight to the ironies, ambiguities and ambivalences, as well as to the seemingly confident assertions and the apparently simplistic generalizations.

At this juncture, a brief survey of the biographical background of Arthur Miller becomes quite necessary to assess the literary worth of his works, and his mind in his dramatic art. Arthur Miller was born on 17 October 1915 in New York city and lived the first fourteen years of his life in Harlem. That section of the city was then a fairly prosperous middle-class area of mixed ethnic composition, and the playwright remembers the time of evenings spent around the piano singing the latest hit songs, of writers skating on Central Park, of summers playing baseball on litter-free streets with no garbage cans.

The Miller family was fairly typical. Isidore had come to America from Austria with his parents when he was still young and had worked his way up to become a successful manufacturer of ladies’ coats. His wife, Augusta, a first generation American born in New York, had taught public school before her marriage. Although not orthodox, the Millers could speak Yiddish, observed Jewish customs, and gave their children a fairly sound background in Judaism.

In this context, the comment Christopher Bigsby is worth mentioning here for it argues the point how the ethnic origin of Arthur Miller has a bearing on his mind and art and the interesting piece of criticism reads thus:
Miller's career began with an engagement with his identity as a Jew; in a sense it seems fated to end with a similar commitment. Like those other Jewish-American writers, Mailer, Malamud, Bellow, he seems to have set himself the task of confronting a flawed human nature with the kind of resilience, which can translate self-hatred and despair into moral force. Arguable, however, he has become less convincing as a playwright as he has become more convincing as a moralist. (American Quarterly 339)

In 1929 the family moved to the Midwood section of Brooklyn, then a semi-rural suburb of New York city with great elm trees, unpaved roads and empty spaces behind the houses. The move was occasioned in part by a slackening in the Miller business, but perhaps as much by Mrs. Miller's desire to be close to her relatives who had moved to that area following the First World War. Here the family lived for long periods with Mrs. Miller's father and, as the playwright recalls, about thirty uncles who were always in and out of the house. In the Summer, Arthur and his cousins fished off the rocks of Coney Island, and the family kept a vegetable garden as well as rabbits and chickens to reduce the number of journeys to the grocery store four miles away. After the collapse of the stock market, which destroyed the Miller business, the gardening became more than a convenience.
The poverty of an early life forced upon him a loss of faith in the traditional values of life. Arthur Miller remarks, “The Depression was my book. Practically everything that had been said and done up to 1929 turned out to be a fake. It turns out to be that there had never been anybody in charge” (Shadows 77).

Arthur Miller’s disillusionment with the systems and structures of the American society and the Establishment, brought on by his traumatic experience with sudden poverty, coincided with his adolescence when even normally a certain amount of disillusionment inevitably comes along the process of growing up.

Arthur Miller is ever conscious of the fact that the hidden forces of life are more powerful than the individual’s will or effort. As in Greek tragedy, man still is a victim of forces, which operate beyond his control and are generally at variance with his own actions or intentions.

In modern times, capitalism plays the role of the mysterious fate or destiny that was the force in Greek plays. The power of capitalism and the resultant commercial values tend to shape and control the life of the individual. N. S Pradhan makes a pointed observation, which is worth quoting here:

Miller has continued to champion the cause of the underdog, and the harassed average man who is a victim of exploitation. On the whole it can be said that the chief qualities of Miller’s writings are his courage, his humanism, and his deep compassion for the weak and the oppressed. (Introduction to Death 8)
Arthur Miller graduated in 1932. But he found that his academic record was not good enough to get him into University and, in any case, there was no money to send him to a University for higher education. He worked at a variety of jobs until he settled down as a shipping clerk in an automobile-parts warehouse in Manhattan at $15 a week. It was here that he discovered serious literature.

In this year at the warehouse he read more than he had in the rest of his life. He was drawn to the great Russian novelists, especially Fyodor Dostoievsky, and he began to dream of becoming a writer. As a writer he wanted to bring about a change and cause progress in society. On this aspect of his life and writing career Neil Carson comments thus:

At Michigan University he began to widen his political perspectives. Along with most of his idealistic contemporaries he became convinced of the need for change and progress in society; he believed passionately that what he thought mattered, and that he and his friends could have an effect upon events. (Arthur Miller 5)

And it ought to be noted that N. S. Pradhan offers a pertinent remark concerning the intellectual appeal of Arthur Miller's plays, particularly All My Sons and Death of a Salesman and it is worth quoting here in extenso:

In his dramatic art, Miller has experimented with various forms although a realistic representation of action has been the mainstay of his plays. Miller has openly recognized the limitations of realism,
which is associated with Ibsen and Shaw, and firmly believes that the requirements of the present day theatre demand a more liberated and effective mode than realism. The expressionistic and non-realistic techniques used in plays like *Death of a Salesman* and *After the Fall* are sufficient evidence. (Introduction to Death 9-10)


A brief survey of the plays of Arthur Miller is necessary to establish his reputation as an outstanding American dramatist of the twentieth century. Arthur
Miller’s first famous play is *All My Sons*. It projects the subject that everyone should be ethically responsible not only to his family but also to the world at large.

Joe Keller, the protagonist of the play, amasses wealth by unethically supplying defective cylinder heads to the Army Air Force. His pilot son, Larry Keller deliberately crashes his plane and dies to atone for his father’s misdeeds which results in the deaths of several other Army Air Force pilots who die in air crashes because of the defective cylinder heads supplied by Joe Keller. And Joe Keller does not take moral responsibility for his unethical conduct and the resultant deaths of the pilots. This is because of the callous merchant in him. It is left to the other son, Chris Keller, to bring home the truth to his father, Joe Keller. In the end, Joe Keller kills himself, by way of doing penance to his son and the society. In the case of *All My Sons* the dramatic discourse is confined to the I-you dialectic (Ray 186).

N. S. Pradhan projects how Miller exposes the evils of capitalism in his play, *All My Sons* and it is worth quoting here:

> Although there was nothing remarkable about this play (*All My Sons*), it made a strong appeal to the audience for its brutal frankness and hard-hitting language. The play tends to express the evil of capitalism in which the pursuit of money leads to a sacrifice of social and human values. (10-11)

The next play of Arthur Miller, namely, *Death of a Salesman*, was an instant success. It is acclaimed by critics as one of the outstanding American
dramas of the twentieth century. Willy Loman, the protagonist of the play is an ageing salesman. He is not able to be active and energetic because of his age. But he still dreams of financial successes and brighter tomorrows. He lives in dreams and fantasies of success and wealth. But then he experiences only failures, frustrations and disappointments and disillusionments in his professional and private life.

Willy Loman’s sons, Biff and Happy grow up to be two average nonentities who believe Willy Loman’s hopes, dreams, desires, and fantasies of greatness, successes, and wealth. In total commitment to the notion of selling, Willy Loman kills himself in an auto accident, to achieve through death, what he fails to achieve in life. Ironically, he sells himself as a last resort.

Miller is still concerned with the theme of man being a victim of the evils of a commercial society. However, the individual is humanized in details and depth. The ultimate feeling is that although in many respects man is a victim of society, he himself being a weak individual who is partially responsible for his fate. The next play of Arthur Miller is The Crucible which makes use of history as allegory to depict a contemporary situation. The cold war between America and Russia following the Second World War, had created in America and Americans a widespread suspicion and fear of communism.

The story of The Crucible takes us back to the America of the seventeenth century when there was widespread fear of witchcraft. Unlike the dominance of the
Church several innocent persons were tortured and put to death. The hero of the play *The Crucible*, John Procter is also falsely accused of witchcraft and there is a trial during which much of the evil and hypocrisy of the orthodox society are exposed. At the end when John Procter is given a chance to save his life by signing a confession of his complicity, he chooses to be sentenced to death rather than implicate his name in a falsehood that will wipe out his identity. The play *The Crucible*, is thus more positive and heroic in tone than the previous plays. More clearly in *The Crucible* than in his earlier plays, Miller’s aim is to depict man as the victim of a widespread evil in society over which he has no control.

Arthur Miller’s *A View from the Bridge* is a story of the hero Eddie Carbone violating the communal code of honor and hospitality. He betrays his guests Rudolpho and Marco, two illegal immigrants and his wife’s distant relatives. It is because of his love for his niece Catherine, whom Rudolpho eyes with love.

*A View from the Bridge* is a drama of passion in which Miller introduced a new aspect of human personality that is the hidden forces of instinct and passion. Just as in the earlier plays man is sometimes shown to be a victim of outside forces beyond his control; similarly he can also be a slave of the mysterious forces working from within his body.

Arthur Miller’s next play, *After the Fall*, was written nine years after the publication of *A View from the Bridge*. It is the most complex and the most autobiographical of all the plays of Arthur Miller.
The entire play is an exercise in self-analysis and examination of guilt in Quentin's relationship with his two wives and with society in general. The complex form of the play, After the Fall, helps Arthur Miller to bring to surface some very subtle aspects of human personality, still regarded as controversial.

Arthur Miller's next play, The Price, deals with the conventional realistic form and the typical situations of two sons trying to examine their relationship with their fathers.

And in the play, The Creation of the World and Other Business, Arthur Miller ridicules the traditional belief in the Myth of the Garden of Eden that man is fallen by nature and that he has to atone for the sins committed by his forefathers.

Arthur Miller is not willing to subscribe to the theory of the Original Sin adding on to the actual sins committed by man in his individual life. Arthur Miller's point of view is that the fall was a trick played on Adam and Eve, which they could not understand.

Thus, this critical survey of the Oeuvres of Arthur Miller establishes his reputation as one of the outstanding American dramatists of the twentieth century. What distinguishes Arthur Miller from some social dramatists and social scientists is his recognition that the social environment is a support as well as a prison.
Unlike Ibsen, for example, whom he otherwise resembles, Arthur Miller never shows self-realization as a desirable end in itself. Selfishness in its various forms of materialism or self-indulgence is one of the cardinal sins in Arthur Miller's world. Man finds his highest good in association with others. On the other hand, that association must be voluntary, not coerced.

Thus, the other evil in the plays of Arthur Miller is an uncritical other directedness (the handing over of conscience to others, or the pathetic desire to be thought well of by the neighbors). Arthur Miller focuses on the point of intersection between the inner and outer worlds, sometimes approaching it from one side, sometimes from the other. Neil Carson feels:

Miller sometimes seems almost medieval in his concern with such topics as conscience, presumption, despair and faith. Miller is quintessentially an explorer of the shadowy region between pride and guilt. His characters are a peculiar combination of insight and blindness, doubt and assertiveness, which makes them alternatively confront and avoid their innermost selves. To the tangled pathways between self-criticism and self-justification there is probably no better guide. (Arthur 154-155)

Furthermore, Arthur Miller is identified as the playwright who underscores the significance, relevance, and consequence of hopefulness in a world grown
weary of defeatism and despair, and the statement makes interesting reading, and hence it is quoted here:

Miller is the spokesperson for those who yearn for the comfortable certainty of a belief, but whose critical intelligence will not allow them to accept the consolation of traditional religions. What seems certain to ensure his continued popularity in a world grown weary of the defeatism of so much modern literature is his hopefulness. (156)

At this juncture, after the critical survey of the plays of Arthur Miller, it becomes necessary to argue that Arthur Miller’s theory of creativity is profound, comprehensive, and perceptive. His aesthetic view is termed as an integral aesthetics. An artist must execute his thought through some medium. But in this execution artist is not completely free in the sense that he can do whatever he likes to do. Creative process is a rule-bound process. In artistic creation, cognitive element is as much important as the affective element.

Arthur Miller’s theory of creativity is a kind of organic theory where all the factors are so interrelated that the meaning of one is not intelligible without reference to the other. These relations do not stand in any of relation. The expression is termed the expression of ideas or what is called content. But this content is not something preserved. Content is not separate entity, which is externalized or expressed.
Content is in expression. It is in form. It is not a relation of form and content but form-content relation. Similarly, it is not the relation of art and society, or artist and observer, but art-society and artist-observer. Form and content are organically related and through them other categories are also intrinsically connected with a work of art.

Creative process does not end only in bringing into existence some object which one calls art-object. That work is not art-work, which remains confined within the four walls of the room of the artist. True art involves not only the artist but also art-observer. An artist is to externalize his ideas and he is also to communicate his ideas. Like any communicative system, where receiving and transmitting are mutually dependent, in artistic creation, creator and enjoyer are also interdependent. Art is communication.

Again, the art object, which is often attributed to a particular artist is really speaking not of the artist alone but also of the society in which the artist lives. In this context, the pithy but pointed observation of Christopher Caudwell is that art is the product of society as the pearl is the product of oyster (Illusion 9).

The creation in its ultimate analysis is the creation of the social-self. Social role in the artistic creation has been so much emphasized by Arthur Miller that an artist cannot have any personality, which has no reference to the society. Individual man and universal man must be combined in an artist.
Since the artist or the work of art cannot be cut off from the society, an artist cannot ignore his obligation to tradition. Tradition and modernity are not incompatible. An artist cannot reject the tradition. The development of art and human development are not two separate processes. Creativity is rooted in human experience. And Arthur Miller fulfilled all these requirements in his crafted art products. Once again Christopher Caudwell opines, “the world of art is the world of social emotions of words and images, which have gathered, as a result of the life experience of all emotional associations, common to all and its elaboration of social life” (11).

Modernity is not another determinate approach. It is really a series of efforts at maximum self-expression. Admittance of sociological component in creation is a point to note in aesthetic theory of Arthur Miller. It ought to be stressed that Arthur Miller’s mind belongs to a level far above the level of the common understanding and as his writings are the writings of a realized soul who has seen and experienced truth in and through the brilliant imagination and exquisite sensibility, it is very difficult to explain his theory in terms of our known aesthetic categories.

It is a living aesthetic of flesh and blood and also of spirit. The concepts like form content, expression, and communication are of quite different import. They cannot be understood in their common usage. Arthur Miller’s aesthetics appears to be something like meta-aesthetics, if the term can be used at all, in comparison to other theories of creativity, which appear in the aesthetic literature.
Arthur Miller’s contention has been that man lives in the universe. But he is not mere passive spectator here. He has in him his inquisitive spirit and that is why he wants to know the world in which he lives, moves, and has his being. Man is also knower and he knows with his mind. But in the knowing, which is nothing but aesthetic knowing quite different things occur. Here knower is of primary importance and object is object, so far as it is molded by mind.

In artistic knowing man really knows himself. Object is secondary. The reality of the object does not depend in any way on the investigating mind, the knower. But what is real in art is always mental in the sense that without some subjective reference it is nothing. Man moves freely in all directions by overcoming all hindrances and all limitations. And the function of art is to deal with these diverse experiences of man.

When man is guided by reason he cannot fulfill all his multifarious dreams and desires because the dry and dread reality imposes restriction on him. But the objective barrier recedes as man takes recourse to imagination. And imagination is man’s free guide. What he fails to achieve in reality he achieves and realizes in imagination. And Arthur Miller’s art reflects on these aspects. And he is aware that expression of imagination and the training or culture of imagination is essential for artistic creation. Imagination is to be expressed in a proper way. And imagination necessary for artistic creation should be constructive imagination. It should be based on reality.
An artist cannot overlook his world in which he lives. His imagination should stand the scrutiny of the rational mind. Artistic thoughts though not as objective as the objects of science, nevertheless, Arthur Miller believes that the thoughts of the artist are not mere fancy. They are also to be based on fact or reality. Thoughts originate from the world around.

By truth Arthur Miller means the reality of the art-object. The contents of the artistic creation are to be based on fact, that is, the real objects – objects as they exist in nature. Truth has to depend on fact. The point that is made here is that one’s imagination cannot transcend the bounds of one’s experience. Imagination, however free, cannot create anything, which is not believable. Artistic creation is conditioned by our surroundings and also by our personal experience.

Arthur Miller believes that the imagination, which is based on fact, is capable of producing real and true art than the one, which is not so based. Yet again, Arthur Miller happily marries memory with imagination and creates a sense of a sunlit world, which is the hidden positive in his art products. He employs irony and paradox to great dramaturgical advantage.

A real artist cannot ignore the demand of reality and at the same time he cannot forget the supreme goal or ideal of human life, which to Arthur Miller means life of universal. The artist is an individual but he realizes in him the universal. By proportionateness Arthur Miller means that there must be harmony among the elements of the symbolic structure. A writer reveals that much of a
thing from which one gets the idea of a totality or completeness. Yet again, the work of art that is the product of creativity must exhibit novelty and also a sense of proportionateness. Novelty is the mark of original creation and it is admitted by most of the critics of aesthetics. The way the artist transforms the materials collected from nature, the rules he implicitly follows while he paints or writes are his creation. And creativity involves proportionateness or coherence.

In creativity one becomes aware of the fact that artist has taken his materials from the world around him. His thoughts, his feelings are not his absolute creation. Artists, like all other human beings, live in society. They with their thoughts and feelings are the product of society. The materials of artistic creation are derived from the outside world and they are again sent back to the world through his creation, that is, through the work of art. But the artist does not give exactly what he receives. Artistic creation is not the exact reproduction of nature. The artist transforms the derived materials in his own way. And in this transmission comes the working of the artistic genius.

The originality of the artists is to be sought in the way in which the artist transforms his materials and the greatness of the artist lies in this originality. An artist is to obey certain rules known before he works, say, before he paints a picture or writes a novel. But an artist is congratulated not because he obeys the existing rules but because he embodies in colors and words something, which did not exist before. He is the originator of certain rules.
Yet again, the belief of Arthur Miller has been in the formulation of effective sentences. To him an ornamental sentence is a literary sentence. Ornamentation of medium is essential but it can in no way surpass the thought for the expression of which the medium has been used. Otherwise real art loses freedom and is defeated. In the art proper there is life and as such it has growth.

The artistic truth is not something tangible to be seen or observed by the sense. Artistic revelation is like beauty and loveliness of the woman. It is beyond imitation. It is above technique or skill. It transcends the skill and it is not hidden by it. Moreover, in creativity three things are to be considered. They are the idea, form and technique. Thoughts are to be externalized through some medium. Externalization of thought through medium represents the form of creation. And the technique stands for the way according to which medium is handled.

Yet again, the artist must be conversant with the community in which he lives, and for which he creates. In writing something, for example, the writer cannot use language, which is not known to the community for whose sake he is writing. Since art is not confined to the artist only, artistic creation does not end in the making of the work of art. What the artist really does is to communicate his thoughts to the society through the work of art and as such he cannot ignore the social control. Intelligibility is an essential point in creativity.

And the term, creative, cannot be applied to an activity, which does not result in a product having positive aesthetic or artistic value. Moreover, creative
activity implies coherence and lucidity. Lack of coherence and lucidity is an
evidence of lack of control. This charge cannot be applied to Arthur Miller's
crafted art.

In fact, critical control and inspiration make creative activity in Arthur
Miller a resounding success. And in the creative process of Arthur Miller two
moments are distinguished. One is the phase of inspiration, with the new
suggestion that occurs in his consciousness, The moment of inspiration is
sometimes accompanied by exalted feelings. And the other phase is the moment of
development or elaboration. In this context, the pointed observation of Richard
Wollheim is worth quoting here, for it argues to the point added above:

First, that the work of art consists in an inner state or condition of the
artist, called an intuition or an expression. Secondly, that this state is
not immediate or given, but is the product of a process, which is
peculiar to the artist, and which involves articulation, organization, and
unification. Thirdly, that the intuition so developed may be externalized
in a public form, in which case we have artifact, which is often but
wrongly taken to be the work of art, and equally it need not be so. The
ideal theory identifies work of art with an inner process. (Art 52-53)

When form, technique and theme blend well, a literary masterpiece is born.
Form and theme dictate the techniques and all the three in turn enhance the central
idea lending it distinct and unique texture and tone.
Delighting in language Arthur Miller has used it as the means of the artist for creating the art world and preserving it against time. John O. Stark's pointed observation is worth quoting here:

In literature this bliss usually takes the form of wonder at the adroit use of man's greatest invention, language, and this wonder is most intense when the wonderer is the linguistic master. (Literature 83)

One comes away from the plays of Arthur Miller, the great craftsman awed by many things but chiefly by the dazzling of verbal skill. Yet again, the love of Arthur Miller for the specific is one reason why his plays are endowed with such luminosity. In his hands the subject of the specific receive loving attention. Specificity, not reality, is reality. And Arthur Miller is interested in style, beauty and quality. Yet again, the subject of his art is life, and he understands it through imaginative learnings. Arthur Miller adroitly marries the past with the present. His literary products are edifices whose every corner deserves the closest attention, and such an examination is invariably a rewarding experience.

Thus, it is conclusively established that Arthur Miller is a creative writer, and his plays, particularly All My Sons and Death of a Salesman, have lasting value and they lend themselves to inexhaustible study.