Chapter II

Class Consciousness and Social Determinism
CHAPTER TWO

CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS AND SOCIAL DETERMINISM

Class consciousness is conscious of one's social class or economic rank in society. (Lukacs 1986)

From the perspective of the Marxist theory, it refers to the self awareness, of a particular class; its capacity to act in its own rational interests. Members of 'lower classes' often have a greater class consciousness than do members of the 'upper class'. America has the majority of its class – related issues clouded by race.

Defining a person's social class can be a determinant for his awareness of it. Non Marxist social scientists distinguish various social strata on the basis of income, occupation or status. (Cambridge 1986)

In All My Sons the main theme is the economic basis of social consciousness. The high class businessman Joe Keller's evasion of social responsibility for a decision in war time which led to the loss of twenty one lives. Though he is guilty, he tries to justify his guilty action by his typical American commercialism. But Chris Keller becomes the opposite of Joe as if he is conscious of class distinction. He is actually aware that capitalist society emphasizes competition over cooperation, that it tends to overlook the need for human solidarity, mutual aid and support for the weak based on egalitarian principles.
Joe's intention of doing everything for his family placing family above the society infuriates Chris who shouts:

CHRIS. Is that as far as your mind can, the business? What is that – the business what the hell do you mean you did it for me? Don't you have a country? Don't you live in the world? What the hell are you'. You're not even an animal, no animal kills his own. (AMS 2.60)

Not only Chris condemns his father, but the short sightedness of the typical American businessman's creed exposes the class difference. In fact, this theme of typical commercialism is related to the post war disillusionment of both civilians and soldiers, those who survived after seeing the horrors of war as well as some of the splendid human qualities it brought out. Once again towards the end Miller through Chris warns the upper class of his motive:

CHRIS. You can be better. Once for all you can know there's a universe of people outside and you're responsible to it, and unless you know that, you threw away your son because that is why he died. (AMS 2.64)

Some have regarded *Death of a Salesman* as Communist propaganda denouncing the evils of capitalism, while others have seen it as a sympathetic study of the problems of big business. A great deal has been said and written about
what *Death of a Salesman* is supposed to signify both social and political viewpoints. For instance, in one periodical of the far right it was called a "time bomb separately placed under the edifice of Americanism". In Catholic Spain it ran longer than any modern play and it has been refused production in Russia but not from time to time in certain satellite countries depending on the direction and velocity of the wind. In America even when as it was being commanded as a piece of Communist propaganda, two of the largest manufacturing corporations in the country invited Miller to address their sales organizations in conventions assembled, while the road company was here and there picketed by the Catholic War Veterans and the American Legion.

M.W. Steinberg opines that Miller's concern with the social problems and the social injustice have its effect on the lives of the characters. The economic basis of social mischief is as obvious in *Death of a Salesman* where the common man is crushed by forces outside himself and by illusions, false ideals, spawned by those forces.

Almost everyone believes that Arthur Miller clearly deserves the title of 'Social Dramatist' apparently the only question is whether to call him a Marxist or a humanist. Indeed it would be going beyond the evidence to suggest that he adheres to any 'line' whether political or ideological. Yet some critics call him a Marxist and believe that his work presents a socialist community on the economic structure of America.
Tom Driver declares "nevertheless he hears a quasi Marxist stamp and most of his plays tend to become mere partisan social critique" (48). William Weigand sees Miller as a borrower of Odets 'Marxist' themes as a preacher who sermonizes on the pathetic martyrdom of an oppressed middle class (103). And Eleanor Clark arrives at the following point regarding Death of a Salesman:

It is of course the capitalistic system that has done Willy in the scene in which he is brutally fired after some forty years with the firm comes straight from the party line literature of thirties, and the idea emerges lucidly enough through all the confused motivations of the play that it is our particular form of money economy that has bred the absurdly false ideals of both father and sons. (Partisan 663)

Arthur Miller does condemn faults of capitalism and contemporary social values. His approach and judgement are both not critical but human. Harold Paul feels "the merit in Miller's treatment of his material lies in a certain clean moralistic rationalism" (71). Paul West argues "Miller's warning against dedication to material success supports Christian existentialism" (84). Popkin claims "it is a liberal parable of hidden evil of social responsibility" (59).

To the Stoic, in fact God was Natural Law, and his other name is Destiny. Thus it is in the famous hymn of Cleanthes:

Man is himself a part of the great world-force, carried along in its all-embracing sweep, like the water beetle in a torrent. He may
struggle, or he may let himself go; but the result is the same, except that in the latter case, he embraces his doom, and so is at peace.

(Selected Short Writings 1)

The world, after the two Global confrontations and the Great Depression – the Wall Street Crash has turned out and out materialistic. There is the merchant in everyman. Militarism grows stronger and fiercer mainly to protect the materialistic shores of the nations. In fact modern man is caught in the vicious circle of materialism-militarism-materialism.

There is an ever-increasing momentum and spurt in the dollar-spinning spree. Every man is roped into the evil circle of the lost generation on whom all values are lost. It is in an environment with the heavy concentration on money and money alone. It is such an environment benchmarked by fatalism and determinism that shapes and determines man’s life and conduct.

It is a money-minded materialistic world that exercises a deterministic control over man. In this deterministic environment there is the total absence of values. Man has sold his conscience to evil forces. He does not value fortitude, moral courage, justice, prudence, and temperance, conscience, truth or veracity, morality, egalitarianism, solidarity and brotherhood, goodness, patience, tolerance, compassion, faith and hope.

On the other hand, it is a world with the total absence of virtues and a great measure of the presence of the vices such as selfishness, aggrandizement, greed to
earn more, hoard more, and spend more. There is no moral compunction on the part of anyone. There is pride, prudery, and presumption. In fine all good virtues both human and cardinal are prostituted at the altar of the dollar. It is a dollar-spinning and dollar spending environment that deterministically rules man in the modern world.

Yet again, this money conscious world has assumed itself into a force of fatalism that reins the life of man. So much so, such a material and money conscious society gains the power of determinism and the force of fatalism and controls man in the modern world. It is a world dominated by selfish capitalists and profiteering. The harassed average man and the stamped down underdog are victims of exploitation. They are forced to lead a life of degradation, degeneration, and dehumanization. It is a world brimful of social injustices, coupled with the loss of values that controls man deterministically and fatalistically. Man loses faith in life and drifts ways from ageless virtues of goodness and grace.

Some critics continue to see in the dramas (his plays) one of man’s most powerful means of exploring his own destiny. Some see him primarily as a ‘social dramatist.’ Considered in this perspective, Miller is part of a tradition, which descends from Ibsen through Shaw and the playwrights of the 1930s. Such dramatists, so the theory goes, present man in conflict with a repressive social environment. The underlying implications of their plays are that society is flawed, that the majority of men are too blind, superstitious or venial to see it, and that
what is needed is a radical re-examination of conventional ideas in preparation for a complete overhauling of the system (Arthur Miller 152). And Nissim Ezekiel argues thus:

In themes that frequently recur, Miller appears to be arguing strongly in favor of certain positive relationship between the individual and society, against injustice, exploitation, competition and vested private interest. He also exposes the human tendency to put one's self above all else, which causes confusion and suffering. (91)

In fine, the social environment as a force of fatalism and determinism controls man in the modern world. He is not able to escape from the clutches of such an environmental fatalism and determinism. This is precisely the fate of Joe Keller, Chris Keller, Larry Keller, and Kate Keller of All My Sons, and Willy Loman, Biff Loman, and Happy Loman, and Linda Loman of Death of a Salesman.

At this point a detailed explication of what is meant by fatalism and determinism becomes necessary and there is an exegesis of these two terms. It must be acknowledged that belief in fatalism is a sad state of mind that all people fall into. They do not know the difference between God and history. One of the aspects of fatalism, in all history, is that philosophers and religionists all over the world have encouraged fatalism. They teach that it is God who determines all that shall happen in God's universe.
And God has not given fatalism either to necessity, or to chance, or to the
caprice of man, or to the control of Satan to determine and control the sequence of
events and all their issues. The argument goes that God keeps the reins of
Government of the universe in His hands. This is attributed to fate. It involves an
inevitable necessity in the falling out of events.

And this doctrine of fatality is the one supreme difficulty which
philosophers and religionists find hard to reconcile between them and the Mother
church. Men with hearts on fire with love to God are not able to visualize God
without His ally Fate. They feel that they are like the sheep being ever controlled.
The common desire of every individual, of course, is that he be allowed to be the
architect of his own fortunes, and be the determiner of his own destiny.

The individual trusts that he can do better without being controlled by an
external agency or influenced by an outside power. But he is not able to get over his
faith in God. He believes that he works by the general law of God and that he is
always under the Divine influence. In this unshakeable faith there is no deviation over
the centuries. The individual is convinced that this Divine influence is a diffused
force which is present through the whole universe. And it plays on all alike, just like
gravity, or light, or heat. In this context, Benjamin B. Warfield feels:

If we conceive God's modes of operation, thus under the analogy of a
natural force, no wonder if we cannot tell Him from Fate. For Fate is
just Natural Force; and if Natural Force should thus govern all things that would be Fatalism. (Selected Shorter Writings 1)

When a man thus identifies God with Fate and Natural Force, he obtains resignation. And the resignation thus attained conceals beneath it the most intense bitterness of spirit. Benjamin B. Warfield questions reasonably, “If caring avails nothing, why, certainly, take good care; but if care is taken for you by a God, what is the use of taking care? It’s all the same, whether you care or care not; the God takes care only for this – that you shall have cares enough” (2).

This is the outcome of fatalism. Furthermore the question arises concerning what is the line of difference between Fatalism and Predestination. Schopenhauer observes on this point that predestination and Fatalism do not differ in the main. They differ only in this, that with predestination the external determination of human action proceeds from a rational Being, and with fatalism from an irrational one. But in either case the result is the same (1).

That is to say, that Predestination and Fatalism differ precisely as a person differs from a machine. And yet this is not a radical difference. Yet again, William James by referring to Marcus Aurelius makes a pointed observation, if the gods care not for me or my children, there is a reason for it. And the passionate cry of Job runs thus:

“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him” (Book of Job 5:7).
Nor is the difference solely in emotional mood. It is precisely the difference that stretches between materialism and religion. According to the candid observation of Benjamin B. Warfield who stresses the difference between Fate and Predestination. The language of men cannot tell the immensity of the difference (1).

Richard Gaskin presents a philosophical analysis of Fatalism and bivalence, and by taking into consideration of the definition of Aristotle’s response to fatalism. Richard Gaskin argues that the individual does not have the power not to do a thing or to do a thing. He maintains that this is not true. He contends that the fatalist’s argument is based on bivalence. It is based on the principle that every statement is either true or false.

Richard Gaskin thus projects the outline of the arguments offered by the fatalist:

1. If it is true now that I am going to do x, then it is not in my power not to do (to refrain from) x.

2. If it is true now that I am not going to do x, then it is not in my power to do x.

3. If it is either true now that I am going to do x, or is it true now that I am not going to do x.

The traditional response consists in accepting thesis (1), and the antithesis (2), and avoiding the conclusion (3). This is precisely the Aristotelian response.

Fatalism is the view that an individual is powerless to do anything other than what he actually does. It is argued for in various ways: by appeal to logical
laws, and metaphysical necessities; by appeal to the existence and nature of God; by appeal to causal determinism. When argued for in this way, it is commonly called Logical fatalism, or in some cases Metaphysical fatalism. When argued for in the second way, it is commonly called Theological fatalism. When argued for in the third way it is not what now is commonly referred to as fatalism.

This is the fate of the men and women of Arthur Miller’s world, who suffer under the fatalistic force and deterministic influence of a commercially oriented world with the total absence of values. And to begin with it is necessary to take into account Aristotle’s argument and the nature of truth under the classification, logical fatalism. Aristotle addresses the question of whether in relation to all questions it is necessary that the affirmation or the negation is true or false.

What Aristotle says could be presented as an argument along the following lines:

Suppose that (i) $p$ is true or $p$ is false, and not-$p$ is true or not-$p$ is false.

Then $p$ is true or not-$p$ is true.

Now suppose that in 1900 one person says that a sea-battle will take place on 1-1-2100, and another says that a sea-battle will not take place on 1-1-2100.
Then what the first person says is true or what the second person says is true.

But, in that case, either it is necessary in 1900 that a sea-battle takes place on 1-1-2100, or it is necessary in 1900 that one does not take place.

But the date of predictions is irrelevant, and it is irrelevant whether any prediction is actually made at all.

So it is necessary at all times that a sea-battle takes place on 1-1-2100, or that a sea-battle does not take place on 1-1-2100.

But the argument can evidently be generalized. So, everything that happens, happens of necessity.

First of all one has to be clear about what is meant by "necessity" here. What is at issue here is not logical necessity. It is rather inevitability. When the occurrence of a sea-battle on 1-1-2100 is said to be necessary at a certain date, what is meant is that at that date nothing can prevent a sea-battle from taking place on 1-1-2100. In particular, no one has the power to prevent it. In this regard Aristotle's contention reads thus:

What is, necessarily is, when it is; and what is not, necessarily is not, when it is not. (Encyclopedia 23)

So, if a sea-battle is actually taking place on 1-1-2100, then on 1-1-2100 is (in this sense) taking place of necessity, nothing then can stop it happening,
because it is happening. What this argument appears to establish, however, is that, if a sea-battle takes place on 1-1-2100, not only is it necessary, then that a sea-battle takes place on 1-1-2100, but it is always necessary. No one could ever have prevented it. And the same applies to everything that can happen.

So, in particular, no one has ever has the power to do anything other than what they actually do. Certainly there is a move, which seems to require some explanation: the move from truth to necessity. It is more likely that the move invokes a certain form of correspondence theory or truth; if what someone says at a certain time is true, then the state of the world at that time must be such as to make it true. But since what is, necessarily is when it is, the state of the world will be necessary. So, anything that is true is necessarily true. Aristotle's solution lies in the fact that not everything that happens, happens of necessity. He accepts the truth that what is, necessarily is, when it is; and what is not, necessarily is not, when it is not (23). Aristotle goes on to maintain his contention thus:

But not everything that is, necessarily is; and not that everything that is not, necessarily is not. (Categories 137)

So the question arises as to wherein lies the solution of Aristotle. He takes more than one view. On one view Aristotle rejects the move from truth to necessity. That sounds the right move. But then, Aristotle actually offers a different solution, which rightly or wrongly is referred to as the
Aristotelian solution. On this view Aristotle’s solution is to deny that it is necessary that the affirmation or the negation is true or false when this relates to things that do not happen of necessity.

That is to say, his solution is that neither what the first person said in 1900 (“There will be a sea-battle on 1-1-2100.”) nor what the second person said (“There will not be a sea-battle on 1-1-2100.”) was true. What each person said was in fact neither true nor false. So one represents the Aristotelian solution as one, which rejects the law of bivalence. And the law of bivalence in every proposition is either true or false. It is to be rejected in particular in relation to such proposition as, “there will be a sea-battle on 1-1-2100”; that is in relation to propositions about future contingents, about what is neither necessary nor impossible.

Though Aristotle does not explicitly say so, it seems that he would also accept that if a sea-battle takes place on 1-1-2100, then what the first person said would then be true, and if it does not, what the second person said would then be true. So one may represent the Aristotelian solution as holding the following: Some propositions are true at some times and not at others. Moreover, Aristotle maintains thus:

Everything is necessarily is or is not, and will be or will not be; but one cannot divide and say that one or the other is necessary. I (Aristotle) mean, for example: it is necessary for there to be or not to be a sea-battle tomorrow; but it is not necessary for a sea-battle to take place tomorrow, not for one not to take place. (Encyclopedia XIX 28)
So, on the assumption that he would have accepted that “there will or will not be a sea-battle tomorrow” is equivalent to “there will be a sea-battle tomorrow, or there will not be a sea-battle tomorrow”, it is either the one or the other. Well, what stops it’s being true that there will be a sea-battle tomorrow is that there is nothing yet to determine that it is true. But there is something to determine that there will be or will not be a sea-battle tomorrow; in the nature of things one or the other must occur. So, it is now true that there will be a sea-battle tomorrow or there will not be a sea-battle tomorrow.

This suggests adopting the following rule for determining the truth-value of complex propositions some of whose constituents are neither true nor false. One considers in turn each of the possible ways in which things may turn out, and works out what truth-value the complex proposition would then have. It turns out to be true in every case it is true; if it turns out to be false in every case; otherwise it is neither true nor false.

Of course this is not wholly a cost free line to take. Apart from the fact that it means that \( p \) and \( p \) is true are not in general interchangeable, it also creates problems for truth-functionality. One may normally think of “or”, “and”, and “not” as being truth-functional. That is to say, one thinks the truth-values of “\( p \) or \( q \)”, “\( p \) and \( q \)” and “\( \neg p \)” are determined by the truth-values of “\( p \)” and “\( q \)”.

However, this might not seem very pressing compared with the threat of fatalism. If accepting a lack of equivalence between “\( p \)” and “\( p \)” is true and a failure
of truth-functionality for “or” and “and” were the only alternative to accepting fatalism. Certainly one would retain the law of bivalence and also the truth-functionality of “or” and “and”.

Yet again, one could distinguish between truth at a time, which depends on the state of the world at the time, and truth simpliciter, which does not. One could then allow that prediction was true, as long as one is talking about truth simpliciter. Also where truth simpliciter is at issue, one can retain the law of bivalence and the equivalence between “p” and “p” is true.

And the Master Argument for Fatalism is that the possible is that which either is or will be. One knows the premises but, unfortunately one does not know the immediate steps. The premises are that everything that is past and true is necessary, and that the impossible does not follow from the possible.

Moreover certain commonly accepted presuppositions yield a proof of fatalism and they are the following:

1. Any proposition whatever is either true, or if not true, false.

2. If any state of affairs is sufficient for, though logically unrelated to, the occurrence of some further condition at the same time or any other time, then the latter cannot occur without the former occurring also.

3. If the occurrence of any condition is necessary for, though logically unrelated to, the occurrence of some other condition at the same time, or any other time, then the latter cannot occur without the former occurring also.
4. If one condition or set of conditions is sufficient for (ensures) another, then the other is necessary (essential) for it, and conversely, if one condition or set of conditions is necessary (essential) for another, then that other is sufficient for (ensures) it.

5. No agent can perform any given act if there is lacking, at the same time or any other time, some condition necessary for the occurrence of that act.

6. Time is not by itself “efficacious”, that is, the mere passage of time does not augment or diminish the capacities of anything and, in particular, it does not enhance or decrease an agent’s powers or abilities.

Incidentally, the fatalist’s challenge about the difference between the future and the present and the past cannot be successfully met. And in life fatalism in close affinity to determinism reign supreme. And it becomes necessary to have a critical survey of determinism at this juncture. Few, including moral and political philosophers, economists, and sociologists, would deny the importance of the reactive attitudes such as forgiveness, guilt, repentance, gratitude, and indignation in one’s life. Echoing Hume, Peter Strawson argues to the point thus:

A number of these attitudes (reactive attitudes such as forgiveness, guilt, repentance, gratitude, and indignation) are required to sustain good interpersonal relationships or personal integrity. And the moral sentiments constitute the very framework within which issues of freedom and responsibility arise. (Free Will 48)
A world with reactive attitudes such as forgiveness, guilt, repentance, gratitude, and indignation but without rational grounds for them would be a world deprived of something seemed morally valuable. Responsibility-attributions have been noted by social scientists to be influenced by contextual features of situations, and they are held by some to be demonstrably irrational. One underlying concern of these social scientists is that one’s behavior is conditioned by social, cultural, psychological, and physical factors over which one has little or no control.

In this context, Peter Van Inwagen makes a pithy observation that consequently, pertinent psychological and social conditioning is taken to be inimical to responsibility. But then it is an easy and tempting step here to theorize that, if such conditioning usurps control, then determinism the view that there is at any instant exactly one physically possible universe usurps control as well (Essay 3).

And Robert Kane’s argument reads well in conjunction with the assertion adduced above and it reads thus:

For if determinism is true, every one of our actions, mental or otherwise, is the determined outcome of the distant past and the laws of nature over which no one has control. Hence, it would be natural to conclude that if social conditioning by parents, peers, pastors, teachers, and so on subverts responsibility, determinism just assuredly does so as well. (Journal of Ethics 402)
Irrespective of whether this particular pathway to incompatibles is persuasive, determinism does undermine what social scientists themselves would be hard pressed to deny has enormous value.

In fact, determinism imperils a rich cluster of the moral sentiments. To the extent that these sentiments are implicated by interpersonal relationships, moral responsibility, or the stance of treating or holding others or oneself morally responsible, determinism imperils these things as well.

And being responsible is to be understood by appeal to the stance of holding responsible, and this stance, in turn, is to be explained in terms of susceptibility to the moral sentiments of guilt, indignation, and resentment. And determinism imperils this account by undermining certain requirements of the stance of holding one morally responsible. In particular, determinism threatens rational grounds integral to the sentiments of guilt, indignation, and resentment.

R. Jay Wallace takes the question about the condition under which persons are morally responsible to be tantamount to the question of the conditions under which it is appropriate to hold persons responsible; and holding persons responsible involves susceptibility to the reactive attitudes in relation to them.

R. Jay Wallace makes a pointed statement in this regard the reactive attitudes germane to responsibility are resentment, indignation, and guilt. These attitudes hang together as a class in that they are linked by related prepositional objects. Each is explained exclusively by beliefs about the violation of moral
obligations (construed as strict prohibitions or requirements), whereas other moral sentiments are explained by beliefs about the various modalities of moral value (Responsibility 12).

A person is morally responsible for his actions. And Wallace argues that to hold someone morally responsible is essentially to be subject to the pertinent class of moral sentiments in one’s interactions with the person. Holding someone to an obligation is a matter either of being disposed to feel the emotions of guilt, indignation, or resentment when one (rightly) believes that the obligation is violated, or one believes it would be appropriate to feel those emotions if an obligation is violated. One accepts an obligation when one internalizes it: one is motivated to act in accordance with it and one can advance practical reasons those which move one to appropriate action in its support (8).

For now, it is sufficient to motivate the thesis that determinism threatens moral obligation (obligation, right and wrong). And determinism effaces alternative actions and possibilities, and, hence, determinism precludes its being the case that one could have decided or done otherwise.

As there is a requirement of alternative possibilities for (overall) obligation, and as determinism expunges such possibilities, determinism is incompatible with obligation. At this point, the counter argument of Derk Pereboom merits careful scrutiny:

Even if pertinent moral sentiments themselves would fall with determinism they could not be deemed rational as determinism their
rational grounds the important social practices that presuppose such sentiments could still be maintained because these practices could be sustained by the germane analogues that would persist even if our world were deterministic. (Living 21)

But processes that are beyond one’s control as in Arthur Miller’s world always produce the truth that determinism bars one from choosing for such choices. In this context Derk Peerboom emphatically remarks that:

The hard determinist can maintain that by admonishing and encouraging a wrong doer. One might communicate a sense of what is right, and a respect for persons, and that these attitudes can lead to salutary change. Likewise, although one could not justifiably think of one’s own wrongful actions as deriving of blame, one could legitimately regard them as wrongful, and thereby admonish oneself, and resolve to refrain from similar actions in the future. (33)

But determinism holds that everything and every event is a natural and integral part of the interconnected universe. From the perspective of determinism, every event in nature is the result of (determined by) prior / coexisting events. Every event is a confluence of influences. While determinism regards humans as “one with” the unfolding matrix of the natural universe, supernaturalism and fatalism regard humans as existing outside of this system.
Most humans are super-naturalists; they believe that humans have “free will”, which causes events in the natural world but is not caused by them. And most humans will defend their “free will” without second thought to the evidence for (or benefits of) alternative explanations.

Fatalism too is a supernatural belief system, which holds humans outside the natural matrix. In direct contrast to the most common form of supernaturalism (belief in free will), however, fatalism holds that the natural world causes events in human life but is not itself influenced by human will or behavior. No matter what you do, the same things will happen to everyone.

Ishtiyaque Haji presents the fatalist’s position thus:

If I do not have free will, then my life is totally determined by the outside world, therefore my beliefs and desires have no effect on the outside world, and no matter what I do the same things will happen to me. (Montist 243)

Of course, it is empirically demonstrable that our behavior affects the environment and thus what happens to one. While many otherwise rational people believe in the supernaturalism of free will, no rational person believes in fatalism. It is only used as a “straw man”: by accepting the false premise that fatalism is the only alternative to free will, one can discard both fatalism and determinism without further thought, and comfortably assume that free will is proven.
But that is not the state of thinking and living. People continue to have faith in determinism and fatalism. Fortunately, fatalism is neither the logical extension of determinism nor the only alternative to free will. Determinism holds that human thoughts, beliefs and behaviors are just as much a part of the natural universe as thunderclouds. This is the fate of the men and women of Arthur Miller’s world, who suffer under the fatalistic force and deterministic influence of a commercially oriented world with the total absence of values.

As stated earlier it is a money-minded materialistic world that exercises a deterministic control over man. In this deterministic environment there is the total absence of values. To reiterate the situation of man in the modern world is that he has sold his conscience to evil forces. He does not value fortitude, moral courage and justice, prudence, and temperance, and conscience, truth or veracity, morality, egalitarianism solidarity and brotherhood, goodness, patience, tolerance, compassion, faith and hope.

At this point there is the need to examine what these values mean and stand for and how modern man suffers from the lack of them because of his single minded focus on earning money, hoarding money, and spending money, and nothing else.

In the first place, Arthur Miller refuses to accept capitalism and the consequential commercialism and consumerism, and therefore, rejects the practice of capitalism, and the absolute primacy of the law of the marketplace over human
labor. Regulating the economy solely by centralized planning perverts the basis of social bonds; regulating it solely by the law of the marketplace fails social justice, for there are many human needs, which cannot be satisfied by the market.

Reasonable regulation of the marketplace and economic initiatives, in keeping with a just hierarchy of values and a view to the common good, is to be commended. Any system in which social relationships are entirely determined by economic factors is contrary to the nature of the human person and his acts. A theory that makes profit the exclusive norm and ultimate end of economic activity is morally unacceptable.

The disordered desire for money cannot but produce adverse effects. It is one of the causes of many conflicts, which disturb the social order. A system that subordinates the basic rights of individual and of groups to the collective organization of production is contrary to human dignity. Every practice that reduces persons to nothing more than a means of profit enslaves man, leads to idolizing money. By serving Mammon alone man cannot find joy or peace in life.

Economic activity, especially the activity of a market economy, cannot be conducted in an institutional, juridical, or political vacuum. The fruits of labor must reach the persons who labor and produce the goods. This is the burden of Arthur Miller’s argument in his plays *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*. And this is what Arthur Miller argues in his plays *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*. Precisely because of capitalistic attitudes and the absence of values in the commercially oriented world. Joe Keller and Willy Loman and the people around them suffer.
Joe Keller, and Chris Keller, and Kate Keller of *All My Sons* and Willy Loman, Biff Loman, Happy Loman, and Linda Loman of *Death of a Salesman* lack moral strength. In fine, there is total absence of fortitude, prudence, justice, and temperance in them.

Human virtues are firm attitudes, stable dispositions, habitual perfections of intellect that govern the actions of human beings, and order their passions and guide their conduct according to reason and faith. They (fortitude, prudence, justice, and temperance) make possible ease, self-mastery, and joy in leading a morally good life. The virtuous man is he who really practices the good.

The moral virtues are acquired by human effort not merely by amassing wealth. They are the fruits and seeds of morally good acts; they dispose all the powers of the human being for communion with love. And fortitude is the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy of purpose in the pursuit of the good. The protagonists, Joe Keller, whose name insinuates the Killer, and Willy Loman whose name insinuates Lowman because he is financially in the doldrums, lack fortitude.

Consequentially they are not able to resist temptations for easy money and they lack the resolve to overcome and prevail over obstacles. They fail to understand that the virtue of fortitude enables one to renounce and sacrifice one's life in defense of a just cause.
Joe Keller and Willy Loman lack prudence and that land them in troubles and miseries. It ought to be noted that prudence is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern. One learns to appreciate true good. He tries to discern true goodness in every circumstance, and to choose the right means of achieving true good. The prudent looks and knows where he is going. He keeps sane and sober.

In fact, Thomas Aquinas argues that prudence is the right reason in action. And prudence is not to be confused with timidity or fear, nor with duplicity or dissimulation. Prudence is called *auriga virtutum* (the charioteer of the virtues); it guides the other virtues by setting rule and measure.

It is prudence that immediately guides the judgment of conscience. The prudent man determines and directs his conduct in accordance with this judgment. With the help of this virtue one can apply moral principles to particular cases without error and overcome doubts about the good to achieve and the evil to avoid. Since they lack prudence, Joe Keller acts without moral principles and pricking of conscience, and Willy Loman suffers because imprudently he feels that money is everything in one’s life.

And justice is the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will on the part of man to give his due to God and neighbor. Justice to God is the virtue of religion. Justice toward man disposes one to respect the rights of each and to establish in human relationships in harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good. The just man is distinguished by habitual right thinking and by the uprightness of his conduct toward his neighbour.
Joe Keller does not treat his business partner with justice. And Willy Loman with a view to making money and with the intention of enabling his son Biff Loman grow immensely rich is willing to sacrifice. There is no justice in his self-slaughter, which is a sin, and it is a thievish knavery practiced on the Insurance Company.

And temperance is the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. It ensures the will's mastery over instincts and keeps desires within the limits of what is honorable. The temperate person directs the sensitive appetites toward what is good and maintains a healthy discretion. He does not follow his inclination and strength, and does not walk according to the desires of his heart. He does not follow his base appetites and desires and restrains his appetites and desires. In the case of Joe Keller and Willy Loman, their sufferings are due to the fact that they lack temperance.

Anger is one of the baser passions the others being jealousy and hatred. In a man of intemperance one comes across hatred, jealousy and anger. This is what rules Willy Loman. In fact, murderous anger and hatred are immoral. And in the case of Joe Keller, he deliberately wounds his business partner by giving false testimony in the Court and thereby betraying and cheating him. When the business partner pointed out the cracks in the cylinder heads, he told his business partner it was too late to effect repair work and asked him to load the defective cylinder heads and send them as they are to the Army Air Force.
But when it came to testifying in the Court he disowns any responsibility and makes his business partner suffer in jail. This is an immoral act done without justice and prudence and without love and charity to his business partner. The root cause is to make fast bucks by hook or crook but to disown responsibility when the criminal means are detected.

Yet again, Joe Keller is without moral compunction. All his actions proclaim that he never respects conscience. The truth remains that man has the right to act in conscience and in freedom so as personally to make moral decisions. He must not act contrary to his conscience. It is because conscience is man’s most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes his depth. Conscience is a judgment of reason by which the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act.

A well-informed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator. Everyone must avail himself of the means to form his conscience. A human being must always obey the certain judgment of his conscience. And Joe Keller refuses to obey his conscience. In fact he shuns the option open to him in the sense for the man who has committed evil, the verdict of his conscience remains a pledge of conversion and of hope.

Ending his life is no answer to his conscienceless act of betraying his business partner. Joe Keller fails to tend toward truth in his business partner to
send the defective cylinder heads to the Army Air Force and then testifying against him saying the untruth that he is blameless in the matter and that his business partner alone is to be blamed for sending defective cylinder heads to the Army Air Force.

In fact, man should tend by nature toward the truth. He is obliged to honor and bear witness to it But Joe Keller fails to do so. And it is in accordance with their dignity that all men are bound to adhere to the truth once they come to know it and direct their whole lives in accordance with the demands of truth. Truth is uprightness in human action and speech is called truthfulness, sincerity or candor. Truth or truthfulness is the virtue, which consists in showing oneself true in deeds and truthful in words, and in guarding against duplicity, dissimulation, and hypocrisy.

As people turn money centered and selfish in their attitudes and approaches to life they lose the sense of brotherhood and live on their own selfish interests. They fail to appreciate the spirit and sense behind the terms, egalitarianism and gregariousness. Christ teaches that if one member suffers, all suffer. That is why he proclaims agonies are my garments. This is the very spirit and substance of the glorious lines composed by Walt Whitman the father of American Literature. The quotable lines reveal this truth:

Agonies are one of my changes of garments,

I do not ask the wounded person how he feels,
I myself become the wounded person,

My hurt turn livid upon me as I lean on a cane and observe (Song 63).

If one member is honored all rejoice together. In this solidarity with all men, the least acts of goodness and kindness the profits rebound to all. But the commercial minded, egocentric, self-centered salesman or businessman fails to appreciate this truth. On the other hand the principle of solidarity is a direct demand of human brotherhood. Solidarity presupposes the effort for a more just social order where tensions can better be reduced and conflicts more readily settled by negotiation.

The virtue of solidarity goes beyond material goods. In fact, socio-economic problems can be resolved only with the help of all the forms of solidarity; solidarity of the poor among themselves, between rich and poor of workers among themselves, between employers and employees in a business, solidarity among nations and people.

International solidarity is a requirement of the moral order; world peace depends in part upon this. A money-centered man does not least bothered about solidarity or brotherhood. It ought to be stressed that a morally good act requires the goodness of its object, of its end, and of its circumstances together. An evil action cannot be justified by reference to a good intention. The means and the ends must be morally good.
A morally good act requires the goodness of the object, of the end, and of the circumstances together. The importance of this truth is beyond the comprehension and practice of Joe Keller, the protagonist of All My Sons, who adopts wrong means to amass wealth and in the process is willing to betray his business partner.

A money conscious man does not value charity. In fact, charity is patient, and kind; charity is not jealous or boastful; charity is not arrogant or rude or proud. Charity bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. In fine patience, endurance, and tolerance are significantly absent in a man who only concentrates on spinning dollars and nothing else.

Faith and hope are missing in a money-minded man. A man with a commercial mindset cannot freely commit his entire self to God and he is not buoyed up by hope which alone can preserve him from selfishness and despair. Thus, all values are lost on a money-minded man. This is the main thrust in Arthur Miller's plays, All My Sons and Death of a Salesman.

In All My Sons, Joe Keller is prepared to adopt dishonesty for he lacks moral strength fortitude to face realities. He very well knows that the supply of defective cylinder heads by him has forced his son Larry Keller to willingly end his life, as atonement for the sins of his father, which has caused the death of several young pilots.
Joe Keller knows the truth of his son’s death. But he hides it from his wife, Kate Keller. This is rank dishonesty. His money-centered approach to life blinds him to values and virtues of life. He pooh-poohs veracity and willingly courts untruth.

At the outset in the opening passage of the first act Chris and his father are talking about Kate Keller who believes that her son Larry is still alive. There is an unexpected symbolic message of sudden breaking of the tree. When it cracked Kate, who was standing in front of the tree, ran into the kitchen and cried. This reveals his concern at the mental condition of his wife. Chris feels that Kate lives in the illusion that her son Larry is not dead and that one day he will come back. He is sure that they have made a terrible mistake of hiding the fact from her. So far no one has tried to dispel this illusion and shock her.

CHRIS. Being dishonest with her. That kind of thing always pays off, and now it’s paying off.

KELLER. What do you mean, dishonest?

CHRIS. You know Larry’s not coming back and I know it. Why do we allow her to go on thinking that we believe with her? (AMS 11-12)

Chris strongly feels that this dishonesty has created greater complications with her. Such things always result into disastrous consequences and this is
happening in the case of Kate. Three years have gone, but she is still waiting for him. Keller says that all the trouble is created by newspapers which give the news of some boy turning up and so she is hopeful of Larry's return.

Chris feels that they should not allow his mother to go on thinking that they also believe with her that Larry will come back. They should tell her the truth and try to prepare her mentally to reconcile with the situation. He wants to avoid unpleasant consequences in the case of his mother. It is assured that Joe Keller is willing to persist in dishonesty.

Ann and Chris try their best to convince Kate that Larry is dead and it is ridiculous to expect his return. But Kate has her own convictions and she is beyond any kind of argument. She opines that there are certain things which are inevitable and therefore they are bound to happen. On the other hand, there are things that never take place. The sun rises because it has to rise. The sun cannot choose not to rise. It is all controlled by God. If there was no God, there would have been a chaos. There would have been no system in the universe as anything could happen any time. The text runs like this:

KATE KELLER. Because certain things have to be, and certain things can never be, like the sun has to rise, it has to be. That's why there's God. Otherwise anything could happen. But there's God, so certain things can never happen. (AMS 1.27)
Chris recalls his past memories in the Army where he had good experiences a great deal when he was in command of a company. He cannot forget his companions who always live in memory. They laid their lives for the sake of each other. Had they been selfish they would not have died. Chris strongly feels "And I got an idea – watching them go down. Everything was being destroyed, see, but it seemed to me that one new thing was made. A kind of responsibility, Man for man (AMS 1.36). But when he comes back from the army, he experiences the bad attitude of the people of his society. His vision of the world was totally shattered. He strongly criticizes the present attitude of the Americans who are crazy after money and materials.

CHRIS. And then I came home and it was incredible. I – there was no meaning in it here, the whole thing go them was a kind of a – bus accident. I went to work with Dad, and that rat – race again I felt – what you said – ashamed somehow. Because nobody was changed at all. It seemed to make suckers out of a lot of guys. (AMS 1.31)

Chris found a hectic competition for money, power and privilege. The war had not changed the attitudes of the people. Therefore, the return to the so called normalcy which is nothing but a competitive world, was an insult to the men who had sacrificed their lives in the war.
The theme of class consciousness has been found in *All my sons* in many places. By cunning and scheming practice Joe was able to send Steve to prison, but he diplomatically talks to his son George, a poor guy who has just returned from jail. The existing legal system is a clear evidence to show the class consciousness of the Americans. Keller makes observation that there are flaws in the contemporary legal system according to which the poor people are punished severely even on account of small offences. On the other hand, for the rich ones do not only go scot free but are rewarded also. Joe has himself in mind and remarks, “a little man makes a mistake and they hang him by the thumbs, the big ones become ambassadors” (AMS 2.67).

Keller seems to express such an opinion to console George superficially. But now he himself is rich and with his riches he was able to manage the law in his favour, he recalls the day he was exonerated of the people calling him a beast. He boasts:

KELLER. The beast! I was the beast; the guy who sold me cracked cylinder heads to the Army Air Force; the guy who made twenty-one P-40s crash in Australia. Kid, walking down the street that day I was guilty as hell. Except I wasn’t, and there was a court paper in my pocket to prove I wasn’t, and I walked .. past .. the porches. Result? Fourteen months later I had one of the best shops in the state again, a respected man again; bigger than ever. (AMS 1.30)
Once the facts are clear Chris is highly pained to realize that he does not have the courage to get his father sent to jail. He feels that if it were a society where honour was real, making his father suffer for his crime would have some point. Chris throws light on the capitalistic society which sees competition over cooperation. This society overlooks the need for human solidarity, mutual aid and support for the poor and the weak. There is no love for human beings. Money making or materialism is the basic principle of society. Joe has killed twenty one pilots for the sake of profit in business. To the shocked Chris it would appear to be a zoo where there is no feeling in the creatures for one another. As he has felt that there is no sense in his world and no use living in such a world, he has decided to leave his home and says, “the world's that way, how can I take it out on him? What sense does that make? This is a zoo, a zoo!” (AMS 3.86).

Chris's disillusionment is caused by his expectation of a better social order to emerge from humanity's experience in war. But his vision of better social order is shattered. The upper class morality or conscious is very well brought out through the words of Joe Keller to his son without a stint of remorse about his sinful activity. He tries to impress upon Chris that a businessman like him has to work under very hard circumstances in order to exist in business. He makes it clear that a businessman has to work under certain limitations. According to him:

JOE KELLER. I'm in business, a man is in business; a hundred and twenty cracked, you are out of business; you got a
process, the process don't work, you are out of business. (AMS 2.74)

Thus according to Joe Keller, a businessman like him has to maintain quality of his products. He intends to say that in his business he could not take the risk of making it known that defective cylinder heads were manufactured by his unit. Therefore, he wanted to replace them before the defect was detected, but unfortunately they were installed in the aeroplanes before the mistake could be rectified.

George plays a crucial role appearing at a crucial juncture of the play. He comes on the scene when Chris and Ann formally announce their intention of getting married. A trunk call from Columbus changes the whole atmosphere on the scene. Keller and Kate became nervous smelling that something is going to happen, i.e., the exposure of Joe Keller's part in the crime for which his partner, Dewer is in jail. While Ann rejects the plea of George to marry Chris, George furiously tells the story of the time when the defective cylinder heads were noticed by his father. Keller had been informed of the defective cylinder heads and he had instructed Steve on the phone 'to weld, cover up the cracks in any way he could and ship them out'. Keller had promised to take the whole responsibility. Now the angry George throws a question to Ann:

GEORGE. On the telephone you can’t have responsibility! In a court you can always deny a phone call and that's exactly what
he did. They knew he was a liar the first time, but in the appeal they believed that rotten lie and now Joe is a big shot and your father is the patsy. (He gets up) Now what’re you going to do? Eat his food, sleep in his bed? Answer me; what’re you going to do? (AMS 2.56)

In the dialogue between Sue Bayliss, wife of Dr Jim Bayliss, and Annie one becomes aware of the truth that the Kellers are wallowing in ill-gotten wealth and how Joe Keller smartly has shifted the blame on to Steve, the father of Annie. It is clear that money-minded outlook of life is at the root of all knavery and treachery and dishonesty. In fine, one throws overboard all values if it is a question of amassing wealth even by wrong means.

In his conversation with Ann, Chris reveals his mind. He is sick of the commercial set up. He is not for spinning dollars, hoarding them and spending them. He hates materiality. He is ashamed of the rat race and the cutthroat competition for money. It is literally looting money, which has blood on it. In a low tone he laments that morality is lost and the people have become selfish. In fact they exploit each other for money. Though everything is destroyed there is one saving grace that is a kind of responsibility – Man for man. He continues:

To show that, to bring that onto the earth again like some kind of monument and everyone would feel it standing there, behind him, and it would make a deference to him. (AMS 1.36-37)
In the following passage in a veiled fashion Arthur Miller lashes out at the capitalist society, which has turned society to drift away from morality and virtuous ways. He condemns the people who are educated. Keller says, “Everybody is getting so goddam educated in this country there will be nobody to take away the garbage” (AMS 49-50).

While taking into consideration Arthur Miller’s magnum opus, Death of a Salesman, it ought to be pointed out that American society comprises a lonely crowd of individuals without internal values, hollow at the core, groping for a sense of belonging and affection.

And as stated earlier, the protagonist of Arthur Miller’s Death of a Salesman, Willy Loman is a victim of the evils of the commercial society. Arthur Miller graphically introduces the impact of materialism in the following textual passage. He argues that the high accent on the materialist side of life leaves the underprivileged like Willy Loman and his family members at a great disadvantage. So much so in the capitalist America society the sufferers are the many underprivileged people. The beneficiaries are the few rich. A dialogue between Willy Loman and Linda Loman, is worth quoting:

WILLY. The way they boxed us in here. Bricks and windows, windows and bricks.

LINDA. We should’ve bought the land next door.
WILLY. The street is lined with cars. There's not a breath of fresh air in the neighborhood. The grass don't grow any more, you can't raise a carrot in the backyard. They should've had a law against apartment houses. Remember those two beautiful elm trees out there? When I and Biff hung the swing between them? (DOS 1.6)

Through this passage Arthur Miller argues how the industrialized capitalist society has generated cutthroat competition, rivalry and a rat race for dollars. The accent on materialistic advancement and money purchase power has taken the heavy toll on ecology. Moreover there is a slump in moral values.

Arthur Miller argues the point that the modern commercial oriented and money minded society generates cutthroat competition and rivalry. This accent on competitiveness and rivalry sow the seeds for hatred, envy, and anger.

It is interesting to study the character of Happy in the commercial world. He is willing to prostitute principles for the sake of money. He never scruples to sleep with girls who have been betrothed to wed other men. Sleeping with the women and indulging in licentiousness is the only immoral way open to defeat the business executives whom he cannot otherwise defeat or surpass. To him values such as honesty, chastity, and candor are not of any significance or relevance, for his mind is on dollars and nothing else.
Both the sons of Willy Loman do not in the least bother about moral values. They do not care for the sentiments of elders, even if it is a question of showing care and concern to their parents. After the denial of monetary support from Oliver, both the sons of Willy Loman, Biff Loman and Happy Loman spend the night with girls forgetting their promise to give a treat to their father, Willy Loman. After the sexual bouts with the girls the much-chagrined mother meets Biff Loman and Happy Loman return to their home. This reveals how they are remorseless and how they flout morals.

Already Willy has told Linda about Biff’s rejection of his father and scant respect shown to their father in the restaurant. So she is furious and shouts at both of them:

LINDA. Get out of here, both of you, and don’t come back! I don’t want you tormenting him anymore. Go on now, get your things together! (To Biff). You can sleep in his apartment. (She starts to pick up the flowers and stops herself). Pick it up, you bum, you! (DOS 2.98)

In the following two textual passages Arthur Miller through the protagonist refers to the modern man’s craze for dollars. The modern man concentrates only on money. He considers that there is no life without money and that money is the be-all and end-all of life. Willy tells Happy.
WILLY. You guys! There was a man started with the clothes on his back and ended up with diamond mines!

HAPPY. Boy, someday I’d like to know how he did it!

WILLY. Walked into a jungle, and comes out the age of twenty-one, and he’s rich! The world is an oyster, but you don’t crack it open on a mattress! (DOS 1.28)

Willy Loman, the protagonist, of Arthur Miller’s *Death of a salesman*, concentrates on amassing money and becoming rich. He is the victim of the commercial society with its accent on materiality. If the end is desirable there is no need to bother about the means. Modern man is in the least concerned about values and virtues. Modern man is a Mammon worshipper and nothing else. With a view to amassing wealth and turning out to be a successful man he concentrates on personal popularity. Thus, it is established that through the plays *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman* Arthur Miller projects the modern world, which is bereft of values and virtues.