Chapter 4

Reality Within: Psychological Realism

4.1 Introduction

Psychology has not only influenced drama and fiction, but criticism too. Lionel Trilling has written a classic essay on art and neurosis which reveals the influence of psychology on the modern writer. Hence, psychology is always used to interpret and evaluate literary works.

This chapter makes an attempt to analyze selected plays of Arthur Miller in the light of psychological realism. The unstated part of literary characters' experience assumed as much significance as the manifest action after Freud had empirically proved the role the unconscious played in our lives. The inner world of literary characters becomes very interesting for critical exploration, if they happen to be neurotically disposed.

Freud, Adler and Carl Jung made notable contributions to the development of psychoanalysis. Freud constructed a model of personality with three interlocking parts; the id, the ego and the superego. The id, the most primitive part, can be thought of as a sort of a storehouse of biologically based urges: the urges to eat, drink, eliminate and especially, to be sexually stimulated. The sexual energy that underlies these urges is called the libido. The id operates according to what Freud called the pleasure principle. Left to itself, the id would satisfy its fundamental urges immediately and reflexively as they arose, without regard to rules, the realities of life,
or morals of any kind. The id is usually bridled and managed by the ego. The ego consists of elaborate ways of behaving and thinking which constitute the "executive function" of the person. The ego delays satisfying id motives and, channels behaviour into more socially acceptable outlets. It keeps a person working for a living, getting along with people, and generally adjusting to the realities of life. Indeed, Freud characterized the ego as working "in the service of the reality principle." That is, the ego tries to satisfy the id's urge for pleasure but only in realistic ways that takes account of what is possible in the real world. The ongoing tension between the insistent urges of the id and the constraints of reality helps the ego develop more and more sophisticated thinking skills. The superego on the other hand, corresponds closely to what we commonly call the conscience. It consists mainly of prohibitions learned from parents and other authorities. The superego may condemn as "wrong" certain things which the ego would otherwise do to satisfy the id. But the superego is not all fire and brimstone. Its conscience-like prodding is also guided by what Freud called ego ideal, a set of positive values and moral ideals that are pursued because they are believed to be worthy. Freud sees ego acting as a sort of mediator between the id - with its blind demands for instant gratification - and the superego - with its rigid, often irrational rules, prohibitions and ideals. The ego's task of satisfying both id and superego requires risky balancing act. For example, if the ego yields to the id's desire for something that is morally forbidden the superego may "punish" the ego with feelings of guilt. The ego's task often involves finding a compromise between the instinctual gratification sought by the id and the strict rule-following sought by the superego. Freud used the notion of unconscious processes to explain why people often act in ways that seem irrational. He proposed three levels of consciousness, or awareness: the conscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious. At the conscious
level, we are aware of certain things around us and of certain thoughts. At the preconscious level are memories or thoughts that are easily available, with a moment’s reflection – for example, what we had for breakfast, or our parents’ first names. In contrast the unconscious contains memories, thoughts and motives that we cannot easily call up. The entire id is unconscious: the ego and superego include material at all three levels of consciousness.

We repress, or banish from consciousness ideas, memories, feelings or motives that are especially disturbing, forbidden or, otherwise unacceptable to us. The process of repression is itself unconscious and automatic. We do not choose to repress an idea or impulse – it just happens, whenever the idea or impulse is so painful and anxiety-arousing that we must escape from it. In such cases, our anxiety triggers repression, and the unacceptable material is buried in the unconscious. The material we repress is usually something that clashes painfully with our ethical standards or self-image.²

According to Freud, repressed material does not remain safely tucked away. Instead, it continues to operate underground, often converting the repressed conflicts into neurosis-disturbed behaviour involving anxiety or defenses against anxiety. Neurotic symptoms often bear a symbolic relationship to the repressed material that is causing them. Freud believes that repressed material is not dormant but active – in unconscious, often painful ways.³

Freud saw dreams as disguised manifestations of id motives, and he described dreams as “the royal road to the unconscious.” In everyday life, he said, unconscious thoughts and forbidden impulses are revealed by accidents and by slips of the tongue or the pen as well as errors in writing, walking, behaviour etc.⁴
People use defense mechanisms to reduce their anxiety and guilt. Psychoanalytic theory holds the view that because the id's unconscious demands are instinctual, infantile and amoral they must often be blocked by the ego and superego. This conflict coupled with the persistence of unsatisfied demands causes anxiety and guilt. The person then seeks ways to protect the ego from this anxiety through several defense mechanisms by which the ego disguises, redirects, hides and otherwise copes with id's urges.  

Many psychologists do not agree with Freud's view that defense mechanisms originate in unconscious conflicts among the id, ego and superego. However, many do agree that these mechanisms account for some of the ways people cope with their problems. Defense mechanisms are generally accepted as a useful way of looking at how people handle stressful situations and conflicts. Some of the defense mechanisms are listed below:

*Reaction Formation* – Reversal of motives is one of the defense mechanisms by which people attempt to cope with conflict. A motive that would arouse unbearable anxiety if it were recognized is converted into its opposite.

*Projection* – Blaming others, or what is known as 'projection' is a way of coping with one's unwanted motives by shifting them on to someone else. The anxiety arising from the internal conflict can then be lessened and the problem dealt with as though it were in the external world. Carried to the extreme, projection is the mark of a behaviour disorder known as paranoia. People with this disorder may project their own unacceptable hostile feelings about others into a whole system of thinking in which they feel that others are out to get them.

*Rationalization* – This defense mechanism substitutes an acceptable conscious motive for an unacceptable unconscious one. We "make excuses" giving a reason
different from the real one for what we are doing. Rationalization is not lying; we believe our explanation. Examples range from the innocent to the serious. Rationalization is a common mechanism we all use to bolster our self-esteem when we have done something foolish.

**Intellectualization** – It involves reasoning. In it, the intensity of the anxiety is reduced by a retreat into detached, unemotional and abstract language. Temporarily separating emotional and cognitive components sometimes helps the individual to deal with parts of an experience when the whole is too much to handle.

**Displacement** – In displacement, the motive remains unaltered but the person substitutes a different goal object for the original one. Often the motive is aggression that for some reason the person cannot vent on the source of the anger. Thus by displacing aggression, the child finds a substitute outlet.

**Regression** – In the face of a threat, one may retreat to an earlier pattern of adaptation, possibly a childish or primitive one. This is called regression. Adults too, sometimes revert when in stress-producing situations to childish episodes of exaggerated dependency. Such behaviour may ward off anxiety by focusing attention on earlier ways of achieving tranquility.

Everyone resorts to defense mechanisms from time to time. When used sparingly and without cost to others, they are nothing to worry about. However, if a person comes to depend on them too much, then those defensive patterns may be harmful. They do not solve the real problems; they only relieve anxiety about it.7

American culture is on its way to becoming a therapeutic culture, more concerned with emotional well-being than with critical intelligence. It has been proved beyond doubt that repressed tendencies, pushed away from the conscious mind and battered down into the unconscious, play a great role in human life.
Repression whether imposed from within or without serves only to create unhappy, pathological individuals, who hate their own pretended virtue, and who throw it overboard as soon as they think it possible to do so. They become abnormal and therefore socially dangerous. 8

Modern psychology has exercised extensive influence on literature. Especially in the twentieth century psychoanalysis grew into a worldwide movement. It became not only the dominant influence in psychiatry, but it also found its way into literature, drama and other products of Western culture. This changed the way Western man thought about himself. "Freudian psychology had flooded the field like a rising tide, and the rest of us were left submerged like clams buried in the sands at low tide." 9

Today in literature we come across neurotic characters. Neurotic characters are perhaps those who behave with psychological truth. Neurotic characters are cast in three distant modes. The most common of these is that the character is shown as healing himself of his ailment on becoming aware of certain hidden facts about himself. 10

Freud's three-tier structure of personality is by common consensus the first comprehensive theory of personality. Id, ego and superego are the three components of personality. Id is the contact point between the psychic structure and the instinctual energy emanating from the body. It is the storehouse of psychic energy, "a cauldron full of seething excitations." 11

Operating by the "Pleasure Principle" it always aims at the gratification of the instinctual urges of the organism in total disregard of objective reality. Ego, which comes next, obeys the "reality principle." While id blindly seeks satisfaction of instincts, ego is highly discriminatory. After taking stock of the external world it lays down "an accurate picture of it in the memory-traces of its perceptions." 12
exercising the “function of reality testing” it regulates the satisfaction of instincts so that the organism is not harmed. The mode of its operation is termed ‘secondary process’ (thinking in realistic terms) and all higher mental functions are placed at its service.\textsuperscript{13} The last of the psychic systems, super-ego, is an internalized version of ideals and moral expectations of society. In Freud’s words, super-ego is “the representative . . . of every moral restriction, the advocate of striving towards perfection.”\textsuperscript{14} Super-ego constantly strives to block the gratification of instinctual urges setting high priority on “the higher side of human life.” In a broad sense, id, ego and superego may be treated as representatives respectively of the body, mind, and society in the psychic structure of man.

An individual has to continually depend on the external environment and such a phenomenon holds before him two important possibilities: reduction of tension through gratification of instincts or insecurity as a result of frustration. If the latter is too frequently the case, he develops anxiety (one of its forms being neurotic anxiety) and his ego is strained too much to maintain balance. If the ego is not so well developed as to effectively manage the crisis through ordinary means, it has to resort to what are called defense mechanisms. All defense mechanisms are unrealistic but they relieve anxiety all the same.\textsuperscript{15}

If the individual has to put up with an excess amount of repression the defense mechanisms fail and the situation will be ripe for the onset of neurosis. Neurotic symptoms provide a substitute satisfaction for the unconsciously held repression. Interestingly enough, a neurotic is often aware of his obsessional acts but still he cannot help it.

The “primary” and “secondary” gains supposed to obtain in the neurotic state are no match for the expenditure of the psychic energy involved in repression.
Neurosis can thus be seen as a desperate attempt on the part of the ego to deal with deep-seated conflicts. If the unconscious conflicts are too powerful to cope with, id takes over and the contact with reality is snapped. The resulting pathological condition is termed “psychosis.” A systematically constructed delusional reality is characteristic of all psychoses.

Repression whether imposed from within or without serves only to create unhappy, pathological individuals, who hate their own pretended virtue, and throw it overboard as soon as they think it possible to do so. They become abnormal and therefore socially dangerous. Repression is responsible for the formation of symptoms, which reveal the presence of a neurosis which owes itself to the non-satisfaction of sexual needs.

Freud rightly says that “the preponderance of the sexual components of the impulse over the social components is the determining factor of the neurosis. And thus, neurosis is the consequence of a conflict between the natural tendencies and the taboos which prohibit them and endeavor to make the artificial prevail against the natural.”

Neurosis – latent, chronic or acute according to variations in temperament and circumstances – has affected the whole individual and social life comprising modern civilization. It re-enforces the already numerous ills resulting from overwork, defective hygiene and social fatigue. It is in vain that people try to find a means of escape in artificial excitements like sports. They remain slaves to their neuroses.

Freud classified mental activity into conscious, preconscious and unconscious. But later on he found this classification insufficient. He introduced three new physical entities, Ego, Super-ego and Id. Ego denotes the entities through which the individual becomes aware of his own existence and the existence of the external world. Freud placed a large segment of the human ego in the unconscious. Part of the super-ego is
conscious and part is unconscious. The unconscious censor in charge of repression is part of the ego-repression. It is a mechanism that the ego uses to defend itself against the impulses of the id. The id is the bedrock of the unconscious, a cauldron of seething excitement, untamed passions and destructive instinct. Freud saw the id as the energizer of the entire psyche – the great 'reservoir of the libido.' The ego after all is only a portion of the id. It must, on the whole, carry out the id's intentions. It fulfills its task by finding out the circumstances in which those intentions can find fulfillment. Ego has to solve three severe masters i.e. the external world, the superego and the id.

Despite the tremendous growth of knowledge and rapid social change, our age is not free from psychological disease. A majority of the people suffer from neurosis, psychoses, alcoholism, sexual perversions, homicidal traits and mania. In modern society neurotics are the worst sufferers as the social norms and moral codes have been so framed as to be particularly disadvantageous to them. That's why novelists and dramatists are encouraged to treat the neurotic phenomenon in their literary work and expose and air the secret wishes of the people who have been suffering repression silently. The writers, who have the grasp of modern sciences including psychology, have described the suffering of their characters with vivid psychological details.

4.2 A Brief History of American Psychological Drama

The psychological play is as old as drama itself. The mystery of human motivation was the subject matter of the ancient Greek dramas of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. At least five centuries before the Christian era, audiences were responding to the stories of Oedipus, who inadvertently slew his father and
married his mother, and Electra, whose destiny was to avenge her father's death by causing the murder of her brother.

During the years when Sigmund Freud was formulating his concepts, Clyde Fitch was the finest realist of the turn of the century; he depicted in his plays studies of human characters that are endowed with a shining virtue or possessed by one absorbing vice. Credit for the first application of a psychoanalytic — as contrasted with a pre-Freudian — concept of psychiatry in American drama rightly belongs to Arthur Hopkins.

The Post-War Era – Transition

The playwrights, seeking for new themes to replace the war, were turning to psychoanalysis as a major topic. With the exception of Arthur Hopkins's *The Fatted Calf*, American plays had been skirting the main issues of psychoanalysis and dangling before the public only the more superficial and palatable of gleanings. Beginning with the 1919 season, however, the critics themselves noted the new era.

The playwright who epitomizes the Freudian period is Eugene O'Neill. O'Neill, Philip Barry and S. N. Behrman were the three significant American playwrights of the twenties. They reflected Freudian thinking to some extent. A significant dramatist of the era Owen Davis' treatment of Freudian subjects are in fact almost a miniature history of psychoanalysis in American drama.

The thirties were significant as a transitional decade in American history and no less crucial as a transition in the American drama. The most conspicuous shift was from an interest in isolated aspects of individual psychology to group-centered problems. With the changed attitude, however, the influence of psychoanalysis did not
diminish. Rather the insights of psychoanalysis were variously applied to social problems as related to prisons, schools, labour and management, poverty, juvenile delinquency, fascism and radicalism. Theodore Dreiser wrote a number of plays dealing with reform schools and the general subject of juvenile delinquency, finally branching off into more general explorations of adolescent psychology.

In the third generation of psychoanalytic writers, we find a group of young talents, many of them with wartime service, who are very much aware of the socio-political pressures in the contemporary world and who are able to interpret them in the light of unconscious motivation. Subtly and with personally created symbols they are able to apply psychoanalytic insights to such various problems as race relations, juvenile delinquency and the American occupation of conquered countries. If there is a difference between the post-war group and their sociological-minded predecessors in the thirties, it is the disappearance by now of doctrinaire political theories to explain the world's troubles in favour of a psychological substructure of unconscious conflict within the inter-acting individuals who compose the social and political masses.

Of all the American playwrights, Tennessee Williams is more characteristic of his generation. He is more psychoanalytically-oriented. Arthur Miller too, was influenced by psychological realism. In this mode of realism the subjective reactions of man's inner consciousness are objectified and enacted on the stage. Playwrights used the flashback and stream-of-consciousness techniques to give fluidity and depth to drama. Following plays of Miller are analyzed in this chapter in a perspective of psychological realism: All My Sons, Death of a Salesman, A View from the Bridge, The Crucible, After the Fall, Broken Glass, The Price and The Last Yankee.
All My Sons

All My Sons is a shocking psychological tale of moral compromise. At the heart of this post-World War II drama is self-delusion, the way it can thrust a man into success even as it erodes his soul. Miller’s first play The Man Who Had All the Luck provides the basis for the drama in All My Sons.

Joe Keller, the protagonist appears both “shamed” and “alarmed” early in the act. Though complacent about his past, Joe’s anguish is dramatised throughout the play. He begrudges Kate’s condescending treatment of him, at the same time he resents her veiled reminder that he does indeed have something to hide. Afterwards, we find that there is in him a sense of guilt which he has certainly subdued and suppressed but which yet persists. Kate Keller too suffers from guilt. Miller points out that “she knows from the outset that her husband indeed shipped faulty plane engine elements . . . Her guilty knowledge [is] obdurately and menacingly suppressed.” She had been, in a sense, a party to her husband’s crime in having supplied defective cylinder heads to the Air Force because she knew his crime but did not protest against it at any stage. Joe’s egotism made him supply defective equipment to the Air Force during the war. He resorted to fraud and cheating only to guard his own financial and monetary interests. After his trial and subsequent acquittal, Joe Keller takes the necessary steps to re-establish himself in his business, and he succeeds. When the play opens, Joe Keller is once again a flourishing manufacturer while his partner to whom he had passed all the blame, is now spending his days in prison. Initially we find Joe talking jovially and even merrily and seems to be perfectly carefree. When a man has committed a wrong, his conscience would certainly make him feel uneasy about it. Joe Keller does have a feeling that he has done a great crime against his
country, which has led to the deaths of twenty-one pilots. He is perfectly conscious of the fact that he has deceived his partner, Steve Deever, whom he held responsible for the supply of the defective equipment, though in reality, the whole responsibility had been Joe Keller’s own. His sense of guilt shows itself in the offer which he made to Ann with regard to her father Steve Deever. This offer surprises Ann. It seems to her a sign of Keller’s generosity; but which actually is an expression of Joe Keller’s realization of the wrong he had done to her father. He tries to defend Ann’s father for having supplied defective equipment to the Air Force. He talks in this manner only because of his sense of guilt.

Joe is mourning the loss of the son who died. But Joe must also wrestle with his conscience, for during the war, he and his partner, Steve Deever were accused of knowingly selling faulty airplane parts that caused the death of twenty-one pilots and he let Steve take the fall, while he pleaded ignorance and returned to the roost. Joe must also contend with a wife who is crippled by fantasy, convinced that her son, Larry is not dead, merely missing despite a three-year absence. All this denial is threatened by the return of Steve’s daughter and the high-school sweetheart of Larry, Ann Deever. She is more of an egotist than anybody else in the play because ever since receiving the news of Larry’s death, she had wanted Chris to propose marriage to her. When Chris proposes marriage to her, she agrees but at the same time complains that he waited too long to make this proposal.

Ann, twenty-six, is a woman of strong principles. Even though she loved her father, she terminated her relationship with him when the court found him guilty of fraud and sentenced him to a long imprisonment. She says that her father did not deserve any pity because he had deliberately sent defective equipment to the Air Force which led to disastrous consequences. She believed Larry’s death had been
caused by one of the defective cylinders. Her sense of guilt is very mild. Chris yearns for recognition, he believes that he has been disregarded by his parents in favour of Larry, his brother. In act I, his father reprimands him saying that Ann is “Larry’s girl,” Chris complains that he has always played the second fiddle:

Chris: . . . every time I reach out for something I want, I have to pull back because other people will suffer. My whole bloody life, time after time after time (68).

He is responsible for his family’s dilemma. He is an idealistic youth who detests dishonesty. He cannot tolerate any kind of dishonest dealings or any kind of deception. Fraud or deception is against the grain for him. He is as guilty as his parents of attempting to hide from reality. He adopts a high moral tone and energetically indicts his father for his criminal irresponsibility. He has long suspected his father’s guilt, but has avoided confronting the truth — purely for selfish motives. Chris watched heroic young men under his command die selflessly in battle to save their comrades. He feels guilty for failing them and surviving the war. His guilt is the guilt of the survivor. 21 Chris tells Ann that he feels a sense of shame in spending money freely and enjoying life. He feels guilty because his men had been killed while he is yet alive. His conscience is troubled because he finds that he is enjoying all the comforts of life inspite of the fact that the sacrifices made by the pilots during the war had not borne much fruit. He even feels guilty in wanting to marry Ann, and settle down to a life of comfort and pleasure. He tells Ann that during the war the soldiers had displayed a sense of responsibility towards one another. But now people are self-centered, as they used to be before the war. He feels it to be wrong even to be alive, to open his cheque book in order to draw money from the bank. He feels it wrong to drive his new car, and to use the new refrigerator in the house.
He has a confrontation with his mother Kate Keller on the issue regarding his intention to marry Ann. His mother had packed Ann’s bag in anticipation of Ann’s departure from the house in George’s company. He becomes angry on learning that his mother wants Ann to go away and has therefore, even has packed Ann’s bag. He asks his mother how she dared to pack Ann’s bag. His mother points out that Ann is Larry’s girl, and Chris replies that he is Larry’s brother and now that Larry is dead he is going to marry Larry’s girl. His mother Kate says, “Never, never in this world” (113).

Kate takes refuge in religion, astrology and superstition to deny Larry’s death. In act I, she insists that her son is alive:

Kate: Because certain things have to be, and certain things can never be. . . . That’s why there’s God. Otherwise anything could happen (78).

In her irrational belief about Larry’s being alive, Kate shows herself to be a superstitious woman; and she shows her superstitious nature in terms of a few gestures and remarks. She deludes herself into believing that he is still alive and will one day return home. To fortify her convictions, she adopts a blind faith in religion and obstinately argues that “God does not let a son be killed by his father” (114).

Her sense of guilt emerges when she tells Chris that if Larry is really dead, then the responsibility for that death rests upon his father, Joe Keller:

Kate: Your brother’s alive, darling, because if he’s dead your father killed him. Do you understand me now? As long as you live, that boy is alive. God does not let a son be killed by his father. Now you see, don’t you? (114).
She and Joe feel apprehensive of George's motive in wanting to come on a visit to the Keller family. George Deever is the son of Steve Deever. He suffers from a sense of guilt. He had terminated his relationship with his father when his father had been held guilty by the court and had been sentenced to imprisonment on a charge of having cheated the government. He had behaved like a callous son. He tells Ann, "... we did a terrible thing. We can never be forgiven. Not even to send him a card at Christmas. I didn’t see him once since I got home from the war!" (101). Subsequently, he had not even been on terms of correspondence with his father who was serving his sentence in a jail in the town of Columbus. Three and a half years later, he feels that he had done a great injustice to his father, and so he pays a visit to him who has been spending his days in prison. His father informs him of the truth about the supply of defective equipment to the Air Force during the war, and George now becomes an altogether changed man. He decides to re-open the case, and try to repair the damage which Joe Keller had done to his father and his family.

Later, feeling convinced by his father's account of the facts of the case, George makes up his mind to visit the Keller family. He resolves to prevent Ann from marrying Chris. He fails in his purpose though he has done his best; and he has been compelled to do so by his sense of guilt in not having stood by his father at the time of the crisis in his life. When Ann asked George how their father is getting along, his reply shows his bitterness against the Keller family. He says that their father has suffered a good deal because he had proved to be a sucker and that Chris' father had not only exploited their father but ruined him. He doesn't want Ann to marry Chris because Joe Keller had ruined their father. He feels disillusioned about the way laws are being implemented in the country.
Joe’s sense of guilt makes him suspicious of George’s motive in having come on a visit to his family:

Joe: All these years George don’t go to see his father. Suddenly he goes . . . and she comes here (87).

He begins to doubt Ann’s motives as well. He feels Ann has been sent by her brother or father to find out something, and reopen the case. After overhearing a conversation between Ann and her brother, Kate cautions Joe, “Be smart Joe now.” As long as he acts to preserve the welfare of his family, Keller believes that anything he does can be justified. He convinces himself that his sole responsibility in life is to be successful so that he can support his wife and children. Kate Keller seeks Chris’ help in the matter. She asks Chris to protect her and his father against any possible harm which George and Ann might want to do to the Keller family. She covers up the role of her husband in the war-profiteering crime. Her loyalty to her husband widens the gulf between them. The knowledge of their deception makes them feel uncomfortable in each other’s presence. Guilt and shame are experienced by both beneath the other’s accusing stare. This dispute between Chris and his mother continues till the mother comes out with the secret of Joe Keller’s guilt.

He tries to rationalize his actions by explaining that he only let the defective machinery leave the shop because he hoped the parts would perform satisfactorily. However, he is forced by his son Chris to admit that he knew the planes were likely to crash with the faulty engines. Joe Keller justifies his decision by pretending that it was consonant with the code of ethics, prevalent in American business transactions, during the war:

Joe: . . . who worked for nothin’ in that war? When they work for nothin’, I’ll work for nothin’. Did they ship a gun or a truck
outa Detroit before they got their price? Is that clean? It's dollars and cents, nickels and dimes; war and peace, it's nickels and dimes, what's clean? Half the Goddam country is gotta go if I go! (125)

Instead of assuaging his guilt and restoring his son's lost respect and love, Joe Keller's denial of wrong-doing only serves to exacerbate the family crisis and intensify his anguish and alienation. Chris becomes indignant on perceiving his father's guilt. He is surprised and shocked by the revelation that his father was the real culprit in the matter of the supply of the defective cylinder heads to the Air Force. While accusing his father, he says that his father seems to be living in an altogether different world from the one in which other people are living. He condemns his father for having supplied defective equipment to the Air Force for his [Chris] sake, when everyday air pilots were dying because of that faulty equipment. Chris angrily asked his father, "... Don't you have a country? Don't you live in the world? ... no animal kills his own, what are you?" (116). He tells his father to get ready to receive the punishment for his crime. He also insists upon taking his father to the police. He feels even more guilty when he finds that he has become a practical man under the influence of his mother. He feels guilty because he cannot take any action against his father. Chris tells Ann that there would be no point in his taking action against his father because he cannot bring the dead pilots back.

When Joe reads Larry's letter, he is touched deeply and undergoes a change of heart. He prepares to go to jail. When Kate protests, Joe replies, looking at the letter he holds:
Then what is this if it isn’t telling me? Sure, he was my son. But I think to him they were all my sons. And I guess they were, I guess they were (126).

He admits that in Larry’s eyes, all the air pilots flying the P-40s were his sons just as Larry was his son. Subsequently, he realizes the full gravity of his crime and under moral pressure, he commits suicide. Joe Keller commits a crime against society for two reasons, namely self-preservation and self-assertion. He believes that he is a victim of others. To preserve his false image and his place in society, he lies about his involvement in the crime that sends unsuspecting pilots to their deaths. He blinds himself to the impulses that make him a danger to himself as well as to others. Keller cannot face what Miller calls “the murder in him, the sly and everlasting complicity with the forces of destruction.” For this reason, Miller says, “Joe Keller’s trouble, in a word, is not that he cannot tell right from wrong but that his cast of mind cannot admit that he, personally, has any viable connection with his world, his universe, or his society.” Hence All My Sons “lays siege to the fortress of relatedness” and shows why an individual’s betrayal of trust and refusal to accept responsibility for others, if left uncensored by society, “can mean a jungle existence for all of us...” Ultimately Joe realizes his guilt. As he cannot redeem himself by going to jail, he commits suicide, as personal damnation.

Chris transfers his feelings of guilt and self-loathing on to his father. He believes that by doing so he will be able to expiate his sins and escape from personal torment. Chris’ own denial partially accounts for his condemnation of his father. Psychiatrist Daniel E. Schneider sees Chris as “an unpreferred son forced... to a subsidiary position in the affections of his father and mother and even of the heroine... since she was betrothed to the preferred son.” Daniel Schneider believes that
through the “power of the playwright,” Chris’ inner hate and vengeance are transformed into “logical and rational justification for all his goals” — winning Ann, crushing his mother’s fantasy that Larry lives, and the “annihilation of the father.” 26 Chris unrealistically expects and demands the kind of noble gesture that is inconsistent with his father’s badly flawed character. As Benjamin Nelson suggests, both father and son pay heavily for their denial, “Each man bears the burden of responsibility — Joe for casting himself in a role he cannot fulfill, and Chris for adamantly maintaining his adolescent adoration of an impossible idol — and each pays for the dichotomy between reality and the illusion he has fostered.” 27

Towards the end of the play, Chris does say that his idealism has left him and that he has now become a practical man who does not have the guts to force his father to face the consequences of his guilt.

Jim and Sue Bayliss, Keller’s neighbours suspect Keller’s guilt yet they relinquish all sense of personal responsibility for ensuring that justice prevails. They continue to treat the Kellers as their best friends. Sue even expresses admiration for Keller for pulling “a fast one to get out of jail.” Jim goes one step further and tries to protect the Kellers from George Deever’s hostile accusations and the family’s ultimate confrontation over the truth. His interference, however, speaks loudly of his own insecurities and feeble effort to escape from reality. Jim tries to shield the family, particularly Chris, from the truth not only because he longs to protect them, but also because he needs to sustain the illusion of their perfection.

The sense of guilt which afflicts all these persons in the play imparts a strong psychological interest to it. Miller takes us into the minds of the principal characters and shows us how the conscious as well as the unconscious or the subconscious mind works. Whatever those characters say in the course of their mutual conversations has
its source in their deeper minds and sometimes in their sub-conscious thoughts. Thus Joe Keller’s offer to help George and his desire to provide a well paid job to Ann’s father may outwardly seem to show Joe Keller’s generosity, but these offers are only an expression of Joe Keller’s sub-conscious sense of guilt, and his sense of guilt is due to the grave wrong which he had done to both his country and to his business partner. Arthur Miller has depicted the characters in the play as individuals with hearts and minds of their own. Their dialogue reveals it. The style and content differentiate its speaker. Dennis Welland says, “The dramatic power resides in the sort of questions asked and in the inability of characters to answer them . . . The questions are in effect dialogue stoppers.”

The imagery is drawn from nature. Miller employs contrast. Kate’s reliance on astrology contrasts with Jim’s reference to “star of one’s honesty.” He makes use of symbols too. The tree of slender apple, which symbolizes Larry has been blown down the night before by a gale. This foretells the stormy action about to erupt. Miller has made use of figurative religious language. Most of the metaphors and allusions are drawn from the New Testament. The actions of the Keller family are compared to biblical figures and events:

Sue: I resent living next door to the Holy Family (94).

This play is issued from “the gradual and remorseless crush of factual and psychological conflict.”

Death of a Salesman

The first title conceived for the play Death of a Salesman was the Inside of His Head. As Miller says, “the inside of his head was a mass of contradictions.” In
the Introduction to his Collected Plays Miller acknowledges that the first image of a salesman that occurred to him was of an enormous face the height of the proscenium arch; the face would appear and then open up. Most of the action takes place inside of Willy’s disturbed mind as he relives crucial scenes from the past even while groping through present-day encounters.

Willy is at the bottom of the totem pole in a capitalistic world. He aims nothing, and he makes nothing, so he has no sense of accomplishment. Robbed of this, he develops a theory that if a person is well-liked and has a great deal of personal attractiveness, then all doors will automatically be opened for him. Willy built his life around these dreams. However, for Willy to live by his ideals necessitates building or telling many lies and these illusions replace reality in Willy’s mind. The firm that he works for, no longer pays him salary. Working on straight commission, Willy cannot bring home enough money to pay his bills. After thirty-four years with the firm, they have spent his energy and discarded him. He makes false moves, one after another in pursuit of easy success. He narrates stories of bigness.

As a father he seeks affection and approval of his sons Happy and Biff. He smilingly accepts all their little vices like thieving and lying which ruin the careers of his two sons. His sons Biff and Happy are failures, but Willy doesn’t want to believe this. He wants his sons especially Biff to succeed where he has not. Biff caught Willy being unfaithful to Linda. This changed Biff’s view of his father and everything that Biff believed in. The scene in the Boston hotel room stunts Biff’s career and leaves his father with a load of sadness. As a result of his discoveries about his father, Biff suffers an emotional and moral shock. He begins with security and innocence and proceeds through enlightenment, anger, frustration and despair; and ends in cynical and sad resignation. His instability can be diagnosed as a psychological illness which
was brought by the hotel room scene in which young Biff found his father with a prostitute, and this illness is increased by Willy’s insistence upon commercial success. Biff even blames his mother and his younger brother for having adopted Willy’s ideas. Biff begins to nurse certain illusions about himself and his future. On entering the arena of life, he found all his dreams of a rosy future dissolving into thin air. He wandered from place to place, took up job after job, but failed to make good. He then became a drifter and was lost for fifteen years. He cannot escape from the pattern Willy has imposed upon him. Biff like Happy, is his father’s victim, as he had been of the false dream by which he has lived. This conflict is the main material of the play. Biff comes to understand the falsity of his father’s ideal and determines to set out on a new path “guided by recovery of his true self.”

Willy very much wants Biff to become a business success while Biff wants to be outside on a cattle ranch, and Willy wants him behind a corporate desk. Biff most closely resembles his grandfather through his preference for leading the life of a drifter (adventurer) out West. Through the illusions that Willy believes, he cannot see that Biff is different and not bound to be successful as defined by Willy. Biff has an internal struggle between pleasing his father and doing what he feels is right. He has a touch of the artist and a dreamer in his temperament. Yet he also breaks his father’s absolute ego ideal by turning out to be a loser, a failure.

Willy’s life begins to close in on him and he has nothing more to live for, except his illusions and fond memories of the past. He believes his boys are great and cannot understand why they are not successful. This is a source of conflict throughout the play. He never questions these values and never realizes that he has lived in a world of illusions and dreams. He tries to bring up his children in that same world, but
he cannot keep up the false front, and Biff would not live that way after the incident in Boston.

Happy can correspond to Ben, but only in a debased way. He shares his uncle’s unscrupulousness and amorality, but lacks his sense of purpose. So, again, he somehow belittles one of his father’s ideal types. Through his philandering and nursing of injured pride, he also reminds his father of parts of himself which he would much rather ignore. Happy tries telling his father that he is losing weight, “I’m losing weight, you notice pop”(26). But his father takes little notice of him. Though he is rich and successful, he feels emotionally empty. He is a very lonely young man.

He too has been his father’s victim, as he had been of the false dream by which he lived. Happy believes only that his father has been incompetent, but he does not reject his father’s ideal. He never turns “his face toward defeat.” After his father’s death, he decides to remain behind and follow his father’s values. He defends his father’s views after Willy has committed suicide.

Willy is son-fixated. When the boys were young, all his hopes were pinned on their future. He constantly makes false promises to his sons and to himself. He encouraged their weakness and at the same time inflated their image. Willy’s state of mind brings the past into the present through conversation. He has delusions of his long-dead brother Ben with whom he has many soul searching conversations. Ben represents an ideal figure that stands closer to reality. In Willy’s consciousness Ben bridges the gap between the realm of fancy and the reality level. It is Ben’s qualities of toughness, unscrupulousness and implacability in the pursuit of gain that Willy wishes for himself and wants his sons to emulate. His mind keeps oscillating between past and present. For example in act I, when he is conversing with Charley, his mind moves in between past and present. As Willy grows old, he has trouble distinguishing
between the past and the present, between illusion and reality, and is often lost in flashbacks where much of the story is told:

Willy: I'm getting awfully tired, Ben.

Charley: Good, keep playing; you'll sleep better. Did you call me Ben?

Willy: That's funny. For a second there you reminded me of my brother Ben.

Ben: I only have a few minutes. [He strolls, inspecting the place. Willy and Charley continue playing.]

Charley: You never heard from him again, heh? Since that time?

Willy: Didn't Linda tell you? Couple of weeks ago we got a letter from his wife in Africa. He died. (34-35)

Charley is Dave Singleman brought down to earth. Indeed, he has none of the flamboyance and panache of the adventurous salesman. Charley is the perfect embodiment of the no-nonsense businessman. It is all the more humiliating for Willy to depend financially on Charley as Charley's example of success is in contradiction with Willy's romanticized vision of capitalism.

Willy's entire life has been lived according to his ideas about personal attractiveness and being well liked. In act I, he tells lies about how well-liked he is, in all of his towns, and how vital he is to New England. The lies he keeps telling other people and the dreams he has for success, actually, begin to convince Willy that he was a great salesman who was known everywhere he went:

Willy: . . . cause one thing, boys: I have friends. I can park my car in any street in New England, and the cops protect it like their own . . . (24).
Linda Loman, Willy’s wife is devoted to him. But her devotion and loyalty are slightly over-stressed. She overlooks his “mercurial nature, his temper, his passive dreams and little cruelties.” She falls under her husband’s influence and becomes a sharer of all his illusions. She becomes an unthinking partner in his fantastic dreams and unrealistic hopes. She restrains him from availing the golden opportunity offered to him by Ben. She is so exposed to her husband’s self-deception that she has caught the infection worse than Willy has. She is the one who knows from the beginning of the play that Willy is trying to kill himself. She’s got the vital information. She knows that “only the shallowness of the water” saved Willy from suicide years before and that Willy has “been trying to kill himself.” Miller pinpoints Linda’s predicament, the one underscoring the impossibility of her life. Linda sustains the illusion because that’s the only way Willy can be sustained. Ironically, she’s helping to guarantee that Willy will never recover from his illusion. She has to support it; she has no alternative, given his nature and hers.

The way the action moves from place to place is expressionistic. Miller introduces the expressionistic style because in this play most of the things are mental and emotional, not physical. The psychological picture created for each character, and the way characters interact, are real and rooted in mental states and the connection between the two generations is the key issue. It reproduces “the psychological urgency of past events.” As observed by Barbara Lounsberry in her article “The Expressionistic devices in Death of a Salesman” Willy Loman is Miller’s brilliant demonstration that expressionistic technique can express inner as well as outer forces. Expressionism can be used to create ‘humane character.’ Willy’s head is a world in which social and personal values meet and merge and struggle for integration.
Symbolism plays an important role in Expressionistic technique. Seeds serve as a link to past, present and future in Willy’s consciousness. In act II, Willy imagines that he can make seeds grow in his garden. He states, “I got to get some seeds right away. Nothing’s planted. I don’t have a thing in the ground”(96). The implication is that his life is a barren thing. Nothing has grown out of his endeavours. Tools too are a link to past, present and future. Willy asserts at one point: “A man who can’t handle tools is not a man”(34). At the same time, ‘tools’ imply growth – of living to make something with one’s own hands and leaving it, as a memorial after death. The two symbols – seeds and tools – are from two different worlds, one from the world of Nature and the other from the world of craftsmanship. It suggests a frustration of growth and the subtraction of dream from reality. The symbol of stocking operates on the psychological level, implying not only an adulterous relationship but also disillusionment in Biff’s mind. Willy harbours a double guilt – towards his wife and towards his son. In Willy’s mind stockings become a symbol of guilt. Linda kisses her husband as he prepares to leave for work in the morning. But he notices that she is holding a stocking. His reaction is sudden:

Willy: Will you stop mending stockings? At least while I’m in the house. It get me nervous. I can’t tell you. Please (58).

The stockings remind him of his affair with a woman in the Boston hotel.

Willy suffers from O’Neillian “pipe dreams,” or Ibsenesque “vital lies.” When convenient or necessary Willy confers upon illusions the status of objective reality. As stated by Dennis Welland in his Arthur Miller, the past as in hallucination comes back to Willy. But it does not come in the right order or chronologically as in a flashback. It comes “dynamically with the inner logic of Willy’s erupting volcanic unconscious.” Here a mind breaks “under the invasion of primitive impulses no
longer capable of compromise with reality." It is the technique of psychic projection of hallucination, "of the guilty expression of forbidden wishes dramatized." For instance, in Howard Wagner's office, Willy stares at the empty seat and addresses Frank who is of course absent, long dead and gone. In another scene, in his garden Willy discusses with Ben's ghost. The ghost is a figment of Willy's distorted mind as we know that Willy is talking to himself.

In his dream-sequences, Miller emphasizes all the weaknesses of Willy by giving us glimpses into his past. Willy seems unable to distinguish between truth and fantasy between the past and the present. As the play begins, Biff has returned home penniless where he finds his father going crazy with his failure in salesmanship. We follow Willy's thoughts into the past in a series of interlocking hallucinatory memory-sequences. In his first dream-sequence Willy warns Biff against making any promises to the girls with whom he moves about and, urges him to watch his "schooling" first. In the memory-sequence with Ben, his elder brother, he remembers his father a man selling flutes across the country. Another dream shows the popular image of success through sporting talent: Biff, the hero of the football field is a dream whereby Willy seeks his own identity. There are memories of Willy's earlier success as a salesman. He loses himself in his recollections, interrupting a conversation with his neighbour Charlie to address the absent Ben. He loses all sense of the present in a restaurant toilet when he recalls his past exposure by his son. Miller employs expressionist techniques to represent Willy's memories. Willy is forced to conjure up the past memories by two motives. Firstly, he seeks escape from his problems by reliving a happier time of past triumphs. Secondly, his dreams show blind intensity of his ambition; they are indications of glory to come. The dream elements are obvious. Willy's dreams take up half of the inescapable shadow of past guilt. These memories
are “distorted, speeded up and heightened by repetition and selection.” Ben represents a promise to Willy Loman. It is a promise of material success but it is also the promise of death.

The accompanying music and the distinctive lighting of the play set these memories apart from objective reality. Music plays an important role in embellishing *Death of a Salesman* with the essential atmosphere. The play opens with Willy’s music – the flute-playing in the background. All memories in early days are accompanied by flute music that relate to Willy’s pioneer father, the flute maker.

The entire setting is wholly, or in some places, partially transparent. By substituting a transparent setting for a bisected head, Miller invites the audience to examine the social context as well as the individual organism. Miller uses an expressionistic setting, “a skeletonized house which symbolizes the invasion of urban economics on the family.” Scenery is dispensed altogether. The “one-dimensional” roof is surrounded on all sides by “a solid vault of apartment houses.” The walls are cut away to allow free entry to the characters in dream and memory-sequences. An air of the dream clings to the place, a dream rising out of reality. The play seems to take place “in a transparent doll’s house with a porch or in the past; or both.” The transparent lines of the Loman home allow the audience physically to sense the city pressures that are destroying Willy. Willy’s subjective vision is expressed also in the home’s furnishings which are deliberately partial. The rest of the action takes place in the kitchen.

Expressionism has done more than any other movement to develop the expressive powers of stage lighting. The German expressionists used light to create a strong sense of mood and to isolate characters in a void. By contrasting light and shadow and, by employing extreme side, overhead and rear lighting panels they
established the nightmarish atmosphere in which many of their plays took place. At the end of act I, Biff comes downstage “into a golden pool of light” as Willy recalls the day of the city baseball championship when Biff was “Like a young God. Hercules – something like that. And the sun, the sun all around, him”(54). The pool of light both establishes the moment as one of Willy’s memories and suggests how he has inflated the past, given its mythic dimension. The lighting also functions to instill a sense of irony in the audience, for the golden light glows on undiminished as Willy exclaims, “A Star Like that, magnificent, can never really fade away!”(68). We know that Biff’s star faded, even before it had a chance to shine and even as Willy speaks these words, the light on him begins to fade. Willy’s thoughts turn immediately from this golden vision of his son to his own suicide. This is indicated by the “blue flame” of the gas heater that begins immediately to glow through the wall – a foreshadowing of Willy’s desire to glide his son through his own demise.

Poetic language is brought out with the help of metaphors, images and symbols which are often embedded in the clichés, idioms and slang expressions of the common man’s language. Illusions appear so suffused within the psychodynamics and vocabulary of the family that the Lomans have slipped years ago into psychotic denial, hoping all along that outer events will somehow right themselves – and their lives.” Towards the end of the play, in the late-night seed planting scene the language used is powerful. Here, Willy is planting seeds by torchlight, “The poetry spreads from action to the language, which is simple, unpretentious, and innocent of any rhetorical inflation, but pregnant, specific, and thoroughly effective.”

He is carrying a flashlight, a hoe, and a handful of seed packets. He raps the top of the hoe sharply to fix it firmly, and then moves to the left, measuring off the distance with his foot. He holds the flashlight to
look at the seed packets, reading off the instructions. He is in the blue
of night. (99)

Linda like the other Lomans uses trite metaphors and informal word-order. She uses
flatly rhetorical speeches in defense of Willy. Willy Loman's "present-action,"
dialogue and his conversations with the ghosts of his past like his revered brother Ben
show that there was a melting of the barriers between inner and outer worlds that gave
to the play its disturbing, poetic quality.

In the symbolic, structural and verbal styles of the play Miller makes use of
expressionistic technique. Apt metaphors are used by Miller to show the gap between
the private life and social life. For example, in the play there are images of green
leaves blotted out by the hard outline of apartment buildings; a flute song displaced by
childish nonsense from a tape-recorder. The metaphors used are sometimes subtle.
Miller has effectively used the expressionistic technique to depict psychological
realism in the play.

The Crucible

Arthur Miller once said:

The central impulse for writing . . . was not the social but the interior
psychological question, which was a question of that guilt residing in
Salem which the hysteria merely unleashed, but did not create.35

Miller originally wrote The Crucible 36 as an allegory about the 1950s American fear
of Communism.

The Crucible mirrors the Communist "witch-hunts" of McCarthyism in 50s
America. It shows all too painfully how even a close-knit rural community can be
desolated once doubt and suspicion take hold. Miller wrote the play to prevent history from repeating itself. He wanted to expose the post-war political climate of suspicion and paranoia.

In the “Introduction to his Collected Plays,” Miller refers to the circumstances in which he wrote The Crucible:

In The Crucible, however, there was an attempt to move beyond the discovery and unveiling of the hero’s guilt, guilt that kills the personality.........

Another motivating factor for Miller’s writing of The Crucible was “man’s inhumanity to man.” He wanted to show how people could become blind with fear and suspicion.

The Crucible is set in a theocratic society in which the church and the state are one, and the religion is strict, austere form of Protestantism known as Puritanism. There is no room for deviation from social norms since any individual whose private life doesn’t conform to the established and moral laws represents a threat not only to the public good but also to the rule of God and true religion. In Salem, everything and everyone belongs to either God or the Devil; dissent is not merely unlawful, it is associated with satanic activity. This dichotomy functions as the underlying logic behind the witch trials. As Danforth says in act III, “... a person is either with this court or he must be counted against it, there be no road between”(85). The witch trials are the ultimate expression of intolerance (and hanging witches is the ultimate means of restoring the community’s purity); the trials brand all social deviants with the taints of devil-worship and thus necessitate their elimination from the community.

The story is of the small community of Salem, stirred into madness by superstition, paranoia and malice culminating in a violent climax. It is also about
savage attack on the evils of mindless persecution and the terrifying power of false
accusations. The protagonist’s discovery of a past folly is presented with an agonizing
dilemma in the play. John Proctor is an honest, upright and blunt-spoken, rationalist
farmer, a man of substance in the community. Though he lives outside the ambit of
the village, he acts as a respected member of the community. In his dealings with
others like neighbours and servants he is straightforward, honest and somewhat
unpolished. He does not like greed which Parris exhibits and so does not go to the
church. He goes against the church and tills his land on Sunday; his excuse is that he
needs the extra workday if his farm is to produce to capacity. But the real reason is his
resentment of the Rev. Parris’ crass materialism hypocritically concealed behind a
façade of piety and also his preoccupation with his congregation’s possible future in
hell instead of its actual spiritual needs in the present. Rev. Samuel Parris is weak,
paranoid and suspicious demagogue. As a pastor, his primary concern is personal
aggrandizement for, when he does not preach on damnation he strives for monetary
compensation such as the deeds to the preacher’s house and expensive candlesticks.
He instigates the witchcraft panic when he finds his daughter and niece dancing in the
woods with several other girls. He is continually beset with fears that others conspire
against him. He fears any defense against the charges of witchcraft as an attack upon
the court and a personal attack on him. He knows that Abigail is lying about the
dancing and the witchcraft, but perpetuates the deception because it is in his own self-
interest.

Abigail is a seventeen year old orphan unmarried niece of Rev. Parris. She
tells lies, manipulates her friends and the entire town. She was a wild adolescent who
wanted to try different things such as dancing in the forest. She with the other children
was found dancing in the woods by Parris. It is Abigail who induced Tituba to
practice the rituals of witchcraft in the woods. As a charm she had drunk human blood. She introduced her friends to Tituba who taught them how to dance in the woods and to conjure up spirits. Tituba was Parris’ slave from Barbados; Tituba was with the girls when they danced and attempted to conjure the spirits of Ann Putnam’s dead children. Abigail is the first person accused of witchcraft and likewise the first person to accuse others of witchery when she finds that the easiest way to spare herself is to admit to the charges no matter their truth. Abigail motivated her friends to practice witchcraft. Fearful of the repercussions and in an attempt to protect herself from punishment when her cousin falls ill after Rev. Parris finds them dancing, Abigail instigates the Salem witch trials and leads the charge of accusations. Abigail William is the cause of all the confusion that has taken place in the community. Despite her accusations, Abigail is an unabashed liar who charges witchcraft against those who oppose her.

When Abigail was young Native Americans killed her parents. The murder of her parents left behind bad memory for her:

Abigail: ... I saw Indians smash my dear parents’ heads the pillow next to mine, and I have seen some reddish work done at night

(27).

Exposure at such a vulnerable age to the macabre scene has affected Abigail psychologically. She had to watch some one she loved getting tortured. She was a victim of the society because her parents were killed when she was young. As a result of not receiving the love from her parents she became wicked. She wanted to freely express her love for John yet because of strict laws in Salem village, she suppressed her feelings towards John. Abigail lusts after John Proctor. She had worked in his
house and John Proctor had committed adultery with her. Later on, she is dismissed by his wife Elizabeth.

Due to her affair with John Proctor, Abigail is shunned and scorned by the respectable townsfolk. Her lust for John makes her hate his wife and she tries her level best to usurp Elizabeth’s position as his wife. She even told Proctor that he still loved her deep inside of his heart and that he was being a coward for going back to his cold and bitter wife. She said that once she kills Elizabeth, they would be free to love one another. She felt that if it wasn’t for Elizabeth, John would come back to her. She thought her relationship with him was sincere while John believed that it was just lust:

Abigail: . . . I saw your face when she put me out, and you loved me then and you do know! . . . I have a sense for heat, John, and yours has drawn me to my window, and I have seen you looking up, burning in your loneliness (29).

She tried to instigate John’s feelings, gossiped about Elizabeth to persuade him to come back to her:

Abigail: Oh, I marvel how such a strong man may let such a sickly wife be – she is blackening my name in the village! She is telling lies about me! She is a cold, snivelling woman, and you bend to her! . . . (29-30).

She lies like a veteran and she resorts to all kinds of lies to save herself. Her action induces frenzy in the other girls and accelerates the chain of accusations and confessions. Abigail’s callous nature stems partially from past trauma; she is an orphan who watched as her parents were murdered by Indians. She now finds that she has clout, and she takes full advantage of it. A mere accusation from one of Abigail’s troop is enough to incarcerate and convict even the well-respected inhabitant of
Salem. She was reproached for her adultery, but now she has the opportunity to accuse them of the worst sin of all – devil worship. She names Elizabeth as a witch, and cleverly sticks a pin into a puppet which Mary Warren had made but is discovered in Elizabeth’s house. Elizabeth Proctor, like John follows a strict adherence to justice and moral principles. She has great confidence in her own morality and in the ability of a person to maintain a sense of righteousness, both internal and external, even when this principle conflicts with strict Christian doctrine. She is a woman of unimpeachable honesty; it is this reputation that causes her husband to be condemned when she lies about his affair with Abigail thinking that this will save him. She is a cold and demanding woman whose chilly demeanor may have driven her husband to adultery and her continual suspicions of her husband render their marriage tense. Her guilt about her frigidity makes her lie to the court about his adultery. She takes part of the blame for John’s adultery, and believes that if she were a better wife, John wouldn’t have become an adulterer.

In act IV, Elizabeth truly felt John didn’t have to take all the responsibility for his lechery. Elizabeth knew that she could tell her husband what to do, but she also knew that he must settle matters with his own conscience. She desperately wanted him to live and yet, she assured him that she would respect him, whatever his decision was. Elizabeth always wanted, what was best for John. She was a good-natured woman who loved John and her family. She was an upright woman who firmly believed that she fulfilled all religious obligations:

Elizabeth: I cannot think the Devil may own a woman’s soul, Mr. Hale, when she keeps an upright way, as I have. I am a good woman, I know it; and if you believe I may do only good work in the world, and yet secretly bound to Satan . . . (66).
She declared to Rev. Hale that she lived up to her creeds and she knew it. If she was thought of as a witch in Salem, it was probable that the whole witchcraft theme was a fraud. Unfortunately, when she was taken into the court she went against God and the truth and, prevaricated about John’s relationship with Abigail. Therefore, Elizabeth broke one of the Ten Commandments.

With Proctor’s case demolished, Abigail resumes her brilliant impersonation of a soul possessed. Mary Warren, another victim of induced hysteria is pushed beyond the bounds of sanity by Abigail and her friends. Having failed to make Proctor confess, Abigail realizes that the game is up and sets sail on a ship having stolen money from her uncle’s strong box. Through Abigail’s character Miller tried to show how ordinary people, for selfish reasons, cause more harm than witchcraft could have done.

Proctor’s past folly is his seduction of Abigail Williams and the fault eventually destroys him when Abigail turns against him and accuses him of witchcraft. The center of the play is his dilemma about commitment. This dilemma is stated in each act in different terms. Abigail tempted him and being a man of strong passions, he fell. When his reason cannot control his passion for Abigail, it ignites action and consequences far beyond his expectations. By the time the play opens, the nagging of conscience has produced a resolve not to touch her again. The affair as far as Proctor is concerned, is over and done with and, he has confessed to his wife and is trying to make it up to her. His guilt is intensified by Abigail’s outburst as she vows, “Oh, John, I will make you such a wife when the world is white again!” His conscience suffers for putting his wife’s life in danger and for his adultery. His guilt connected with the past act makes Proctor hesitate in condemning the trials because he would condemn himself as a lecher. He passes the onus of responsibility on to Rev.
Hale saying that he hopes Rev. Hale will instill some sense of sanity in the community. Rev. John Hale is a scholar from Beverly. He went to Salem on Reverend Parris' request to investigate any supernatural causes for Betty Parris' suspicious illness and thus continues the rumors of witchcraft. He enters in a flurry of activity carrying large books and projecting an air of great knowledge. Initially, he is the force behind the witch trials, probing for confessions and encouraging people to testify. Rev. Hale approaches the situation precisely and intellectually believing that he can define the supernatural in definitive terms.

Listening to John Proctor and Mary Warren he gets increasingly convinced that they, and not Abigail are telling the truth. Despite his early enthusiasm for discerning the presence of witchcraft in Salem, Rev. Hale soon grows disillusioned with the witchcraft accusations that abound and defends Proctor when he challenges Abigail. Rev. Hale does this act to a great degree out of guilt, for he fears that he may have caused the execution of innocent persons. In act III, he throws his lot in with those opposing the witch trials.

The failure of his attempts to turn the tide renders the once-confident Hale a broken man. As his belief in witchcraft falters, so does his faith in the law. In act IV, he counsels the accused witches to lie and confess their supposed sins in order to save their own lives. He lacks the moral fiber of Rebecca Nurse. Although Hale recognizes the evil of the witch trials, his response is not of defiance but surrender. He insists that survival is the highest good even if it means accommodating oneself to injustice – something that the truly heroic characters can never accept. In tragic fashion, his about-face comes too late – the trials are no longer in his hands but rather in those of Danforth who has no interest in seeing its proceedings exposed as a sham.
Danforth, the deputy governor of Massachusetts presides over the Salem witch trials. He is a stern yet practical man, more interested in preserving the dignity and stature of the court than in executing justice or behaving with any sense of fairness. He approaches the witchcraft trials with a strict adherence to rules and law that obscure any sense of rationality, for under his legal dictates an accusation of witchery automatically entails a conviction. Danforth shows that his greatest interest lies in preserving the reputation of the court when he prompts Proctor to sign a confession, thus preventing the backlash of his execution. Danforth is an unwise judge. He was an elder spokesman for justice, and very strict in quelling all opposition in Salem. He was arrogant, obdurate and power-seeking. Danforth was very proud of his career: "[t]his is the highest court of the supreme government of this province, do you know it?"(79). He spoke in a bombastic way, "... Do you know who I am, Mr. Nurse?"(80). He wanted people to know that he was powerful judge:

Danforth: And do you know that near to four hundred are in the jails from Marblehead to Lynn, and upon my signature? And seventy-two condemned to hang by that signature?(80).

By asking these questions he was fishing for compliments. He wanted everyone to know that he was a powerful judge and that no one should look down upon him. He insinuated to everyone that he was an experienced witch-hunter by spitting out questions that had cryptic meaning. He wanted a respectable reputation and he greatly regarded what people had to say about him. Even as the witch trial evidence seemed to evaporate, he continued with the execution. Hale requested him to postpone these hangings for a while, but stubborn Danforth refused and said there would be no postponement. He feared that people would perceive him as an unwise judge. Again, he tried his best to save his reputation by making Elizabeth persuade
John and he tried to use John Proctor to save his own name. Even though John Proctor confessed orally, Danforth did not accept it and told John that he must have good, legal and written proof of confession.

Proctor washes his hands off the problems of the town and refuses to be involved in the abused charges of the witchcraft being made by a small group of frightened and hysterical girls. He tries to avoid any involvement in the Salem witchcraft trials even though the friends and the neighbours whom he has known all his life are condemned as witches. He is a man who has principles and wishes to protect them. He is constantly nagged by his wife Elizabeth to denounce Abigail. He says he will “think on it.” Again, when she urges him his excuse is clear:

I am only wondering how I may prove what she told me, Elizabeth. If the girl’s is a saint now, I think it is not easy to prove that she is a fraud, and the tower gone so silly. She told it to me in a room alone — I have no proof for it (54).

He is aware that if he goes and denounces her she will accuse him of lechery. In view of the fact that the town is already impressed by her they are unlikely to believe John Proctor. So, Proctor wants to save himself at the cost of the community. Proctor’s decision to be involved is not free and open decision. He is pushed into involvement when Abigail denounces his wife Elizabeth as a witch. Before he takes any steps, Rev. Hale arrives with the warrant for Elizabeth. These events force John to be involved. For eighty days, John had tended his farm and remained completely oblivious to the events transpiring in Salem. His first step, however, is still designed to escape commitment. He uses Mary Warren as an appeal to the law for the reversal of the court verdict. Only when this fails John Proctor takes his final step and denounces Abigail as a “whore” and proclaims his guilt publicly. His guilt about his
shenanigans with Abigail makes him confess to adultery in the court linking him in their eyes to the devil. Proctor’s confession succeeds only in leading to his arrest and conviction as a witch, and though he lambastes the court and its proceedings he is also aware of his terrible role in allowing this fervor to grow unchecked. As a result of his involvement, John finds himself being accused of being a witch. Although Proctor never “desired the destruction of religion” he can “see no light of God” in Parris and is “sick of Hell.” His disillusionment is not complete, however, until he is arrested for witchcraft. At that point he is convinced that “God is dead!” Proctor’s identification with the accused is not yet total. He suffers for months in prison. His reason is that he is really different from them:

Proctor: I cannot mount the gibbet like a saint. It is a fraud. I am not that man. [She is silent] My honesty is broke, Elizabeth; I am no good man. Nothing’s spoiled by giving them this lie that were not rotten long before(118).

Proctor strives for a compromise. He signs the confession to save his life but the judges demand that the confession be made public and he finds that he cannot live in society uncommitted. He must be totally and publicly against the accused or totally and publicly with them. There is no middle ground of private commitment and public neutrality. This is Proctor’s final dilemma. Miller does not allow the individual at this point in his career to escape from his social obligations into his private life. After being tried and condemned to death, he refuses to confess. He cannot give “them the lie.” When asked to name the others who are involved John Proctor cries out in hatred, “I speak my own sins; I cannot judge another. I have no tongue for it”(123). He refuses to sign the confession because it will be hung up outside the church. He wants to save his name:
Proctor: . . . How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name!(124).

His predicament is that he does not want to be responsible for the death of the other condemned persons. Proctor attacks the court and the whole system it represents, but his protest ends in frustration and what amounts to suicide because the court itself insists on arbitrating the dispute. He must commit himself one way or the other. There is no middle ground for John Proctor. For the first time, he takes a decision and chooses to die an honest man. He says, “. . . You have made your magic now, for now I do think I see some shred of goodness in John Proctor” (125). Proctor is the enemy of hysteria, his very existence is a challenge to the fanatic temperament and he is consumed by its malice. Miller brings out the dilemma of a man — fallible, subject to pride.

The evil of Salem tragedy recreated by Miller lies within the system and the people who promoted the system for their own evil purposes. It is evil human flaws within the flawed theocratic system that bring about these tragic events. One such “flaw” is the human guilt which prompts the accusations of the guilty about their unlawful witchery in the forest. Guilt also drives the characters we generally define as good sometimes to evil consequences. Other human “flaws” which are manipulated by people in the court system are vengeance (Abigail and the Putnams); jealousy (Abigail and the Putnam); fear and hysteria (the girls in the court); ambition and power (Abigail and Danforth) and greed and lust (the Putnam and Abigail). Though the entire Salem community is in pandemonium, some characters are also fighting internal conflicts of their own.

Hysteria supplants logic and enables people to believe that their neighbours whom they have always considered upstanding people, are committing absurd and
unbelievable crimes — communing with the devil, killing babies and so on. In this play, the townsfolk accept and become active in the hysteria climate not only out of genuine religious piety but also because it gives them a chance to express repressed sentiments and to act on long-held grudges. The most obvious case is Abigail who uses the situation to accuse Elizabeth Proctor of witchcraft and have her sent to jail. In this play, Miller is preoccupied with carving his way to the vortex of violence and injustice pervading contemporary society. Here Miller vivisects the figure of Parris and sees through the pseudo-serious masks with which Parris hoodwinks the members of his society. There is an innate urge to violate the principles of social justice not only in the character of Parris but also in a few characters of the play as well.

The dialogue has a quality that could not easily be achieved in a naturalistic play of the present time. The characters are given a certain dignity and distance by quaint turns of phrase and peculiarities of grammar (mainly survivals in America of early usages in English). It does not sound inappropriate when Rev. Hale says, "... if Rebecca Nurse be tainted, then nothing's left to stop the whole green world from burning"(67), or when Proctor says, "I have made a bell of my honor, I have rung the doom of my good name." This heightened language is in tune with the symbolic nature of the characters, the deep emotions they seek to express and the importance of the themes of the play. Miller's diction is formal, yet simple and easy to understand. His language is plain and concise.

The poetic language of the text is distinguished by the use of opposites which illustrate the extreme conflicts that polarize the Salem community. Images, symbols and metaphors are used by Miller to describe the "Salemite's view of a world." The title 'Crucible' is symbolic. A crucible is a container in which metals are heated to extract the pure element from dross or impurities. The play's central theme is the
spiritual development of John Proctor. He changed from thinking solely about himself to thinking about who was in need most beside himself. He is made better and 'purified.' Witches supposedly use cauldrons to brew their magic potions, and a synonym for cauldron is 'crucible.' The word 'crucible' could also have a metaphorical meaning. The actions in Salem were like that in a brewing cauldron, there were many heated arguments, and people were being 'stirred' and 'mixed' around like a vile potion.

The play is an expressive record of an agonized consciousness which cannot come to terms with a disorganized, disoriented world-disorder. The play is a fascinating and disturbing dramatization of the collective psychology of persecution.

A View from the Bridge

A View from the Bridge reminds us of incestuous passion. Miller calls this tale of incestuous passion in A View from the Bridge a "re-enactment of a Greek myth." It can be clubbed with plays like O'Neill's Desire Under the Elms, Mourning Becomes Electra and William's one-act Verse play The Purification (1946). These plays have echoes of Greek Legends.

There is an attempt to understand the psychological roots of incest in these plays. These plays show a new way of looking at incestuous unions. Miller asserts that A View from the Bridge is a psychological play. "It is in two acts because these qualities of the events themselves, their texture, seemed to me psychological telling than a conventional investigation in width, which would necessarily relax that clear, clean line of catastrophe." A View from the Bridge is a play about a longshoreman named Eddie Carbone. Eddie had incestuous desire for his orphaned niece Catherine.
whom he raised as his own daughter. Eddie’s actions like Kazan’s, violate the community’s unspoken “code of honor.” Miller of course is a conservative in morals; he looks at Eddie’s subterranean passion for his niece as being unnatural, anti-social and unrealizable.

The setting of the play is Sicilian-American occupied section of Brooklyn called “Red Hook” bound by codes of justice and vengeance prevailing in Greek tradition. The main protagonist Eddie is flawed, torn between his sexual desire for his niece Catherine and the universal taboo against incest. He is primitive and uncontrollable. “Eddie is an unsophisticated dockworker trying to bridge and accommodate disparate and not always conscious feelings.” He harbours strong protective feelings towards Catherine, his wife’s orphaned niece whom he and his wife Beatrice have raised. Yet at the same time, those feelings situated as they are on the extreme edge of the paternal or avuncular, threaten to spill over into taboo sexual desire. Miller makes this powerfully clear when for example, he shows Eddie’s pleasure as Catherine lights his cigar. This is an action of warm and innocent affection between niece and uncle, but of course it is also one laden with blatant sexual and phallic meaning.

The young Catherine is uncertain. She relies on Eddie for everything and waits for his approval. Eddie has a more obvious relationship with Catherine. Her actions show her closeness to Eddie. She sits on the edge of the bath while Eddie shaves. Beatrice asks Catherine not to act like a baby around Eddie. Catherine explains how she can sense Eddie’s moods:

I can tell a block away when he’s blue in his mind and just
wants to talk to somebody quite nice. . . . I can tell when he’s
hungry or wants a beer before he even says anything. I know when his feet hurt him. . . (421).

Catherine's part is ambiguous in several ways. She is seventeen but socially inexperienced, both a little girl (Rodolfo calls her this) and an adult woman. To Eddie she acts both as daughter and as a lover. She is a simple and pretty girl from Brooklyn but Eddie sees her as a "Madonna." (It refers to the Virgin Mary as she is depicted in Old Master paintings of the nativity. *Madonna* literally means "my lady," in Italian — the language of Eddie's native land.) Eddie says to Catherine, "You are the Madonna type" (386). In this play the "Madonna Complex" can be seen; especially in connection with Eddie, as Eddie has strong feelings for his niece that resemble the Madonna complex. "Madonna complex" is normally associated with a husband's feelings for his wife. Symptomatic of Eddie's sexual ambivalence is his sexual withdrawal from his wife Beatrice with whom he has not had coital relations in three months. Beatrice is mature and has a clear view of matters. Eddie's ceasing to have sexual relations with her helps her see his problem. In act I, she asks Eddie, "When am I gonna be a wife again, Eddie?" (399). She talks to Eddie and to Catherine but her relationship with Eddie seems more that of a friend than that of wife and a lover. Beatrice has reason to be jealous but is generous to Catherine at all times. In act I, Beatrice tells her niece to be her age, "I told you fifty times already, you can't act the way you act. You still walk around in front of him in your slip" (405). She reminds her that she is now a grown woman: "You're a woman, that's all, and you got a nice boy, and now the time came when you said good-by. All right?" (406). She knows Eddie has done a terrible thing in calling the authorities, but she stands by him. We see Beatrice as a wronged woman. Eddie transfers erotic feelings to Catherine. He does not understand what is happening to him. Incapable of speaking openly about
sexuality, he is nonetheless racked by his failed masculinity; he is impotent in the marriage bed. He is beset by incestuous passion, a love that dare not speak its name, a love he cannot, dare not recognize. 44

Catherine gradually frees herself of dependence on him. She moves closer to Rodolpho, but Eddie's kiss accelerates the process. Rodolpho is slender, graceful and (unusually in a Sicilian) blond-haired (Eddie nicknames him "Danish"). He is strong enough to work, but weaker than the thick-set Eddie. He speaks almost incessantly, Rodolpho is an enthusiast for all things American. This explains why he spends money on fashionable clothes and records which Eddie disapproves. He loves Catherine but is appalled at her suggestion that they return to Italy. Rodolpho has learned presumably from tourists, records and books how to speak fluent English. There is no regular paid work in his home country so Rodolpho has learned other ways to support the family. There is nothing so odd in his singing, cooking and dress-making skills. But in a world where there is work and a man's and a woman's tasks are clearly defined, as in Red Hook, these talents are suspect. He has the same infantilizing, patriarchal attitude towards women that Eddie does. He tells Catherine "... don't cry anymore."

When Eddie issues a challenge to Marco, Rodolpho on the other hand, tries to calm his brother and offers Eddie a chance to make peace, a chance which Eddie spurns. It is Rodolpho whom Eddie seeks at first to eliminate by informing Catherine he is homosexual, then by betraying him and Marco to the authorities. His brother Marco is unusually strong by any standard and excites admiring comment from Mike. Marco is dark and powerfully built. Marco is often silent. He has some difficulty in speaking English, but this is not his only reason. He is very attentive to what is going on. He thinks and then speaks. He clearly believes that actions speak louder than
words, whether in unloading a ship or threatening Eddie. In the latter case, as he raises a chair like a weapon he is able to express an idea which he would not wish to put into words as it would seem to show ingratitude to his host. Marco clearly misses his family and has only come to the U.S.A. out of love for them. Marco speaks more slowly and less fluently, but with simple dignity and clarity. He has a stronger sense of the traditional values of the community. When Eddie attempts to joke about the “surprises” awaiting men who return from working in the U.S.A. for several years, Marco corrects him while appearing not to see anything funny in the suggestion. It is Marco who tells Alfieri that at home Eddie would already be dead for his betrayal. He feels even more strongly than Eddie does about the values which Eddie expresses in telling the story of Vinnie Bolzano. Marco feels a sense of responsibility for his brother (he tells him to “come home early”). But he also feels responsible to the community, and ready to punish Eddie who has injured its unity. After Marco spits in his face and announces, “That one! I accuse that one” (432), Eddie’s quarrel is with the elder brother.

When Marco and Rodolpho arrive from Italy, Eddie’s ambivalence intensifies. His homophobia becomes intensified and increasingly articulated as Catherine takes more than a cousinly interest in Rodolpho. Catherine’s attraction to him brings Eddie’s love for his niece into the open. This unlawful love first appears in Eddie’s obsessive concern with Catherine’s appearance and way of dressing, “I think it’s too short,” Eddie says of a dress and goes on, “Katie, you are walkin’ wavy! I don’t like the looks they’re givin’ you in the candy store. And with them new high heels on the sidewalk-clack, clack, clack. The heads are turnin’ like windmills” (381).

Eddie feels threatened by Rodolpho’s physical and personal eccentricities. He says denigratingly that these eccentricities are obvious indicators of Rodolpho’s
homosexual and heterosexual tendencies which threaten in either case to take away Catherine from him.

Eddie tries to rationalize that Rodolpho is attracted to Catherine because she can be his ticket to American citizenship. Given Eddie's own ambivalent feelings towards Catherine, he wishes to protect his niece from marrying a homosexual who merely desires to exploit her to gain citizenship.

He even fabricates an image of Rodolpho as a sexually "abnormal" and ruthlessly pragmatic exploiter who is trying to disable a rival lover for the desirable woman whom the incest taboo will never allow Eddie himself to possess. When Alfieri advises Eddie to let go of Catherine, Eddie's answer leaves no room for doubt that his obsession is sexual. "I take the blankets off my bed for him, and he takes and puts his dirty filthy hands on her like a goddam thief!"(410).

Beatrice intuitively senses what is happening to Eddie. She blurts out the awful truth at a climatic moment late in the play, "You want somethin' else, Eddie, and you can never have her!"(437). Eddie tries to justify his behaviour by believing in the fiction that Catherine is a naïve and innocent girl being taken for a ride by Rodolpho. But his illusion that Catherine is a virginal Madonna figure or a mere child in need of his protection is shattered when he is surprised to see a post-coital Catherine and Rodolpho. Eddie is confronted with incontrovertible proof of Rodolpho's masculinity and heterosexuality. He also recognizes that he has lost Catherine to her illegal alien cousin. Until now, Eddie has suppressed his erotic desire for his niece, sublimating his passion into the acceptable behaviour of concerned parent. He is not conscious of his desire for his niece. To Beatrice Eddie says, "That's what you think of me - that I would have such a thoughts?"(438).
When Catherine acknowledges the sexual rite de passage she has undergone, she says, "Eddie, I’m not gonna be a baby any more!" (422), Eddie’s suppressed desires, jealousy and anger come to the fore and “he reaches out suddenly, draws her to him, and as she strives to free herself he kisses her on the mouth.” He replaces his usual platonic kiss with the taboo kiss of a lover. Eddie throws Catherine’s lost virginity in her face. At the same time he releases an unmistakably powerful sexual drive that is given increased dramatic force for the audience by what has been previously revealed about Eddie’s conjugal abstinence.

Rodolpho tries to pacify Eddie, telling him about his intention to marry Catherine. But Eddie verbally attacks him for his effeminacy:

Eddie: What’re you gonna be? Show me! Rodolpho flies at him in attack. Eddie pins his arms, laughing, and suddenly kisses him (422).

It is hardly as simple as Eddie’s enacting the other that dare not speak its name, a homoerotic attraction to Rodolpho. Eddie kisses Rodolpho in a desperate act to castrate the young man in order to prove that Rodolpho is queer and thereby challenge the validity of the heterosexual act that has taken place moments before.

Eddie kisses Rodolpho in his last attempt to reveal Catherine’s lover for what he is. He is, however, open to accusations of unnatural incestuous feelings. Indeed, veiled accusations have already been implicit in Beatrice’s comments and in the interchange between Eddie and Alfieri:

Alfieri: She wants to get married, Eddie she can’t marry you, can she?

Eddie: [Furiously]: what’re you talkin’ about, marry me! I don’t know what the hell you’re talkin’ about! (410).
The scene that brings this 'rivalry' also brings his smoldering passion to the surface when he finds Rodolpho making love to Catherine; he kisses her forcibly on the lips. On this occasion his pent-up passion breaks through into the open, if only for a moment. The kiss is a pathetic attempt on Eddie's part to get even with his 'rival' and to assert his right over Catherine.

Fraught with mixed motives and mastered by passions, he does not truly comprehend his feelings for Catherine; Eddie sends the names of Marco and Rodolpho to the immigration Bureau.

Eddie acts from one point of view as a concerned parent making a final gesture to save his child from a disastrous marriage; and from another point of view, he takes the revenge of a spurned lover who cannot allow his rival to possess the woman who has rejected him. He breaks the taboo of informing to the authorities. Eddie Carbone knows the rules that treachery is the worst crime of all. His incestuous passion for his niece drives him to betray the illegal immigrant kinsmen – Rodolpho and Marco. Their entry into the Carbone household turns to be unsettling for Eddie. Eddie betrays Rodolpho and Marco by informing the Immigration Bureau about them as the last resort.

He wants to retrieve his good name from Marco. He wants an affirmation that he has acted in Catherine's best interest and that Rodolpho is morally and sexually reckless, and at the same time he himself should not become a neighbourhood pariah. He is a man of powerful passions and a man who never quite understands those passions. Moreover, his phallic maleness channeled undoes him, and his knife does likewise. "Eddie lunges with the knife. Marco grabs his arm, turning the blade inward and pressing it home . . . again"(439). Eddie barely speaks to Rodolpho and refers to him in the third person when he is present. "He didn't take my name; he's only a
punk. Marco’s got my name”(437). Eddie understands that in effect, a challenge has been issued by Marco. Contradicting Marco is Eddie’s only way of trying to recover the lost name, but is as impossible as it is for him to have Catherine as a lover.

Catherine is bitter in her condemnation of Eddie after he has betrayed Marco and Rodolfo, but she shows she still cares for him when she says, “Eddie I never meant to do nothing bad to you”(439) as he dies. Beatrice and Catherine have a good relationship with each other; this is never as intense as Catherine’s relationship with Eddie, but it outlasts it. The immigration authorities are fate’s intractable furies. Alfieri the lawyer, functions as a Greek chorus educated and part of the community. He tries to stop the inevitable but is powerless to do so.

The chorus/narrator Alfieri never leaves the stage. He opens and closes the play. He introduces the action as a retelling of events already in the (recent) past. By giving details of place, date or time, he enables the action to move swiftly from one episode to another without the characters having to give this information. This is often skillfully mixed with brief comment.

Stage directions refer not to exits and entrances, but to the light going down or coming up on Alfieri at his desk, as we switch from the extended bouts of action (flashbacks to Alfieri) to the interludes which allow him to comment, to move forward in time and give brief indications of circumstantial detail, such as the source of the whisky Eddie brings home at the start of act II. Alfieri’s view is also the “view from the bridge” of the title:

Alfieri: . . . I knew then and there – I could have finished the whole story that afternoon. It wasn’t as though there was a mystery to unravel. I could see every step coming, step after step, like a dark figure walking down a hall toward a certain door(410).
To those around Eddie, those “on the water front,” the events depicted are immediate, passionate and confused. But the audience has an ambiguous view. Alfieri narrates the extended episodes of action, for example, as the chair lifted by Marco, or Rodolpho being kissed by Eddie. Alfieri makes sure we judge with our heads.

Miller brings out the awesomeness of passion by showing that even such an ordinary character can be moved by his passion to act against his best interests, ignore the pleas of his family and be led to violate the very code he values so highly. As the passion magnifies its power over him, he gradually gets alienated from his wife and niece and in trying to oppose Rodolpho, is led to the extreme of betraying his guests. An intersection of conscious and unconscious motives and passions creates a tangled skein that nonetheless relentlessly draws Eddie, Catherine, Rodolpho and Beatrice into its tragic weave.

As its very title suggests, Miller’s play is about being between extremes, about disparate loyalties and mixed motives, about the conflict between tribal and codified law, and about acceptable and unacceptable sexual behaviours. This play emphasizes the psychology of the characters. Miller catches the characteristic cadences of a speech and emphasizes the rhythm of it through the verse. The dialogue is heightened and poetic. The characters in the play use unadorned, zestful and rhythmic speech.

There are allusions to Madonna and Garbo signifying Eddie’s conflicting emotions towards women. This religious allusion not only conveys Eddie’s awe at Catherine being grown up, but also Catherine’s suppressed sexuality. “You’re the Madonna type”(386). This image can be seen on various levels in the play. The Madonna’s purity, chastity and virginity obviously contrasts with the immoral sexual attractiveness which Eddie associates with “the high-heeled shoes and Garbo images.”45
Symbolism is often found in the action, for example: the dancing, the chair-as-weapon, Eddie’s dying by his own hand. The set as well as accommodating the action is symbolic of Eddie’s world and values: the apartment (home, where the family is) and the street (the wider community, where he meets friends). The story of Vinny Bolzano is a parable about the need for solidarity and loyalty in the community (this ranks even above family ties, it seems), but also is prophetically symbolic of Eddie’s own act of treachery.

The Brooklyn Bridge, another symbol, is a link between the present and the past, a link of two different cultures – modern Brooklyn and traditional Sicily. The play’s title itself is symbolic. It is not the view from ground level or the “water front,” but a detached and objective view. The view of Alfieri, the view that is “civilised” and will “settle for half.” It also suggests an objective distancing between the action and the view.

Miller writes of Eddie in his production’s two-act version: “The importance of his interior psychological dilemma was magnified. . . . What had seemed like a mere aberration had now risen to a fatal violation of an ancient law.” Miller concludes: “It is more possible now to relate his actions to our own and thus to understand ourselves a little better not only as isolated psychological entities, but as we connect to our fellows and soar long past together.”

In ancient times, dramatists have been fascinated by incestuous love with its guilt and conflict. But Miller’s play is more knowledgeable about human motivation and the disposition of human affection. Incest is no longer presented as being the result of a family or divine intervention that was inevitably destructive and that aroused “uncomprehending, if pitying horror,” as it did in Greek plays. It is apt to
describe *A View from the Bridge* as noted by a critic Abha Singh as “violent psycho-sexual in nature.”

**After the Fall**

In *After the Fall* \(^{49}\) “Miller depicts some of the most painful aspects of human nature with a brutal honesty that sears his audiences.” \(^{50}\) Miller writes of the inception of *After the Fall* in *Timebends*:

I began to search for a form that would unearth the dynamics of denial itself, which seemed to me the massive lie of our time. . . I saw American culture, the most unfettered on earth, as the culture of denial; even as the drug, in expanding the mind, denied that it was destroying the mind, and the new freedom of sexuality denied that it was dissolving the compassionate self-restraint that made any human relationship conceivable over time. . . Inevitably the form of the new play was that of a confession, since the main character’s quest for a connection to his own life was the issue, his conquest of denial the path into himself. \(^{51}\)

As observed by Christopher Bigsby, “*After the Fall* is a confessional play.” \(^{52}\) The play is about Quentin, who tries to analyze himself, his private and public responsibilities. It is a trial of a man by his own conscience, his own values, his own deeds. Quentin a lawyer by profession, is terribly alone and ‘confesses’ himself to an unseen listener who could be his own other half, or a representative of the objective world, or God. He is under constant self-analysis and self-reproach. His torturous course through life is dominated by two great themes: betrayal with its handmaiden
guilt, and the concept of a universal bond. He carries on his conscience a load of guilt which he tries to expiate, partly through his confessions. His guilt arises from a sense of wrong doing in the world — his own and others. He suffers from guilt due to the horrors of the Holocaust and tries to find an explanation of its evil. It is sharpened by his inability to rise to a standard set by imaginary innocence and false mortality. He confesses to the listener to have lived in selfishness and self-righteousness.

On a recent trip to Germany Quentin meets Holga who is about to arrive in America for a Conference. She is an Austrian woman who has survived the Second World War and so knew the horrors of war from first hand experience. She brings a kind of a bleak hope to Quentin. He decides to marry her. He is indecisive of his third marriage. But before he marries her, he tries to find the reason of his previous failed marriages. He examines his relationship with Maggie and Louise — his ex-wives. He is unsure, weakened and no longer in control. He reviews his life, his relations to others and the world around him. In doing so, the wounds of his past reopen, torturing him with his own inadequacy. He confesses: "... I'm a little afraid of who and what I'm bringing to her"(13). A decision to remarry involves the larger question of committing himself to life again. He probes into the relationships and the events of his past life. His past deeds are re-enacted as his life is turned inside out and he turns "at the abyss to look at his experiences."53 His earlier failures and the failures of others in his personal, professional and political life have disillusioned him with life itself and he has retired to its periphery. He is in Miller's words, "weighed down with a sense of his own pointlessness and the world's."54

His concept of love is altered by his client Felice, a naïve girl and his mother. Felice regards him as saviour and a father figure which Quentin resents. The mother is tarnished, as she abuses her husband for having lost the family fortune during the
Depression. They are responsible for his traumatic experiences. Betrayal is first experienced when his beloved mother sends him for a walk with the maid and decamps with the rest of the family to the seashore. His mother had betrayed his father by becoming a ‘separate person’ when he had lost his money in the Depression. When he saw his parent’s marriage fail, he fought hard to stop Louise from becoming a separate person. He fought too hard from being a separate person. He fails to keep a balance between autonomy and intimacy in his marriage with Louise, his first wife. He is too self-absorbed and egoistical to pay sufficient attention to her or to feel interested in her or even to observe such minor courtesies like opening the car door for her. He tries hard to be a faithful husband to her; he makes candid confessions of his amorous adventures and infidelities. This increases the distance between them and fills him with guilt and resentment at being ‘for ever on trial.’ In his relationship with Louise, he tries to follow his partner Mickey’s advice:

Mickey: . . . You got to generate some respect for her mystery (40).

He imagines his wife to be a stranger. Louise, Quentin’s first wife, gets the bad end of the stick. Louise’s chief complaint among several other complaints of hers is that Quentin does not treat her as “a separate person.” Louise tells him, “Quentin, you are full of resentment against me, you think I’m blind?” (47). She feels unwanted by a husband who believes that a trusting relationship is one, where a man can tell his wife that he wanted to sleep with another woman, but found the strength not to. A divorce is imminent when she misinterprets Quentin’s wonderment at Maggie’s innocence:

Quentin: . . . I felt strangely abstract beside her. And I saw that we are killing one another with abstractions (62).

This incident is misinterpreted by Louise who says, “You don’t want me.” We only see her in anguished fury at the end of her marriage and her portrait is shrewish and
one-dimensional. She does not wish to be a mere shadow of her husband or "a praise
machine" that she thinks, he expects her to be.

In act I, in the waning days of his marriage to Louise, she cries that she is a
separate person. Quentin declares, he can't bear to be a separate person. Quentin
roars, "When you've finally become a separate person, what the hell is there?" Louise
does not appreciate Quentin's effort to mend their marriage. Her resentment is fuelled
by Elsie, which ultimately leads to divorce. Louise and Quentin remain imprisoned in
their egos and fail to reach out to each other. Louise does not appreciate Quentin's
efforts to mend their marriage. This increases his resentment against Louise and the
breach is unbridgeable. He tells Louise about his temptation to have an extramarital
affair which she sees as betrayal. Quentin realizes the futility of making honest
confessions to Louise because truth, he says is one of the things that 'killed' the
marriage. The breach in their marriage/relationship is unbridgeable. They might have
been in love when they got married, but now towards the end of their relation Quentin
finds death of love "superseded by suspicion, accusation, betrayal and guilt."

Quentin's second marriage is not a relationship between equals. It emphasizes
the absence of balance between self and mutuality in a different manner. Unlike
Louise, Maggie, his second wife is naive, enchanting, possessed and unbearable. She
is haunted by her mother. Though her mother had a puritanical outlook, she was
promiscuous in her behaviour. Maggie is a woman whose innocence has not been
destroyed by innumerable men who have taken advantage of it; she seems capable of
absolute trust, total devotion. She was a receptionist when she first met Quentin. Later
she meets him after four years as a famous singer. She is thankful to him for changing
her life. Quentin traces her from their first meeting on a park bench when her childlike
immediacy reduces him to a blissful little boy to her tragic hellish final days. Maggie
changes from a self-less trusting girl into a vicious and neurotic woman with a virtually insatiable appetite for unconditional affection.

Maggie is irrevocably set on a course that can only end in self-destruction. She puts Quentin into a position of Godlike responsibility for her life; she is also trying to pass over to him the responsibility for her death. She questions Quentin about their relationship to which Quentin replies, “Maggie, we ... used one another!” Maggie still clings to denial, “Not me, not me!”(113). After their marriage she tries to antagonize him with her temperamental outbursts and vulgar language. She makes exorbitant demands on him soon after the marriage. Though Quentin tries to be accommodating, Maggie’s demands go on increasing. She tries to portray herself as a victim. She even tries to commit suicide twice. In act II, Quentin saves her from swallowing a handful of pills. Though she survives this ordeal, she dies a few months later. With this incident, Quentin realizes the truth of the statement made by Louise earlier, “We are all separate people”(110). In act II, in the waning days of his marriage to Maggie, the blonde telephone operator who became a famous singer, Quentin says:

... We are all separate people. I tried not to be, but finally one is – a separate person I have to survive too, honey(110-111).

This measures his growth in self-awareness.

Maggie’s image of a sex goddess demeans him, and her past embarrasses him and at the same time she appeals to the Pygmalion complex in him, the desire “to save” and to “transform her.” Maggie attempts to hide the seeds of self-destruction in her nature by setting herself up as a victim. She has been “kicked around” and persecuted. But at the same time, she has also been selfish and vicious and has co-operated with her persecutors. Inside the world of Quentin’s mind, his betrayal of
Maggie gets linked with all the other betrayals. He attempts to strangle Maggie in trying to prevent her from swallowing sleeping pills. He is too obsessed with his mother’s image to see any other woman. Louise, his first wife says:

Louise: You don’t really see any woman. Except in some ways your mother. You do sense her feelings; you do know when she’s unhappy or anxious, but not me. Or any other woman (37).

In act II, we find him trying unconsciously to strangle his mother for her abandonment of him as a child. As his mother shouts, “I didn’t trick you. . . . I’ll die if you do that! I saw a star when you were born – alight in the world” (117). Her guilt explodes in his mind, and his fingers seize the throat of Maggie, as she lies gasping for breath.

After analyzing his relationship with Louise and Maggie, he becomes aware that judgment must come from within and from recognition of one’s own shortcomings rather than of others. He pleads with Louise and Maggie to feel a little guilt about their own selfishness. Though a lawyer, he didn’t want to defend Lou, his friend, before the Un-American Activities Committee and put his career on the line. He feels quite relieved to hear that Lou has committed suicide but at the same time he is plagued by remorse. He is charged by Lou with betrayal:

Lou: . . . it astounds me that you can speak of truth and justice in relation to that gang of cheap publicity hounds! . . . There is only one truth here. You are terrified! They have bought your soul!(44).

He has learnt that survival is a powerful motivation.

His journey delves into the many mysteries of relationships including the “I” verses the “we” guilt and innocence, and through a series of revelations he finally
accepts the ultimate reality that he is incapable of love. Quentin unfolds his analysis from infancy to maturity, childhood, family relations, rejection by his mother, the loss of father, hero image, political and business associates weave in the rambling formlessness of subconscious thoughts around words, such as idiot, innocence, blessing, truth, justice, guilt, love and betrayal. Through Quentin's personal and public problems Miller explores the existence of evil and the denial of individual responsibility. He grapples with his past and accepts his complicity. It is Holga who redeems him towards the end of the play. Towards the end of the play he learns that evil cannot be dealt with by denial or even by guilt. To hope, love and forgive one must assume responsibility. In this play, Miller is preoccupied with the personal experience of betrayal, the Holocaust, McCarthyism of the 50s and the Depression. For Miller, a post-war Jewish-American writer, the Holocaust is the modern equivalent of the Fall, the relentless reality of evil.

In this play Miller makes use of expressionistic technique. One episode leads to another. The entire play takes place in Quentin's memory. There is a surreal, dreamlike quality to the drama that Miller explores in a very insightful way inviting the audience to explore their own memories as they watch Quentin's memories unfold on the stage. As the "action takes place in the mind, thought and memory of Quentin," the setting is unrealistic: scenes start "lava-like, supple geography," "pits and hollows." When characters are inactive they rest in "abutments, ledges, or crevices."

As Quentin's mind makes free associations between characters, events, bits of dialogue or gestures, actions, locales, or fleeting images, it resembles stream of consciousness. As Quentin recalls people and incidents, they are picked out by light, or disappear into darkness; scenes and dialogue occur concurrently as well as sequentially, sometimes they overlap.
Through poetic dialogue Miller expresses Quentin’s “mounting awareness” approaching “agony.” Maggie’s speech in act II, changes from childlike questions (that invoke protection) to bitter and cynical invective. Quentin’s dialogue grows more varied in length and structure, more lyric in diction. While depicting Quentin’s final realization Miller is at his best. His use of rhythm, imagery, simplicity is a perfect match of theme and expression:

... Is the knowing all? To know, and even happily, that we meet unblessed, not in some garden of wax fruit and painted trees, that lie of Eden, but after, after the Fall, after many, many deaths. Is the knowing all? And the wish to kill is never killed, but with some gift of courage one may look into its face when it appears, and with a stroke of love – as to an idiot in the house – forgive it; again and again... for ever?

(120)

This play like Death of a Salesman abounds in symbolism; the hallmark of expressionism. The failure of love, in a broad sense, is symbolized by the Nazi concentration camp and by the guilt of Quentin. Miller makes the events in the concentration camp a microcosm of what the individual does to others. The tower of the concentration camp illuminates moments of Quentin’s guilt to show that it is in a way, the universal symbol of man’s guilt. The concentration camp is a metaphor not only for the Holocaust and McCarthyism but also his own guilt for betraying those who depend upon him. The play After the Fall is seen as a metaphor.

As the play unfolds, we all see bits of ourselves in the characters and those of us willing to make the journey feel that our burdens have been lightened in some mysterious way bordering on truth. It’s not an easy journey, but nothing worthwhile is easy.
Broken Glass

The play *Broken Glass*,⁵⁵ is set in 1938 New York against the distant backdrop of Kristallnacht. This is not docu-drama. The theme of broken relationship is at the center of the play. The picture of damaged society is at the backdrop. This is a play that explores the dangerous and redeeming compromises of personal life which make the world we inhabit such a terrifying and at times such a hopeful place.

It is a psychological family drama which meshes with events on the world stage, in particular the persecution of German Jews by the Nazis. The themes of isolation, alienation and oppression are well-expressed in this play. Even though the play centres on the Jewish experience, it is still representative of all cultures. The play deals not only with the heroine Sylvia’s illness and her reaction to the Holocaust, but also with her dysfunctional marriage.

The play is a portrait of a marriage that is shattering – as precipitously but surely as the windows broken by Nazi thugs in 1938’s Kristallnacht, the event that seems to have set off Sylvia’s crisis. In 1938, violent anti-Semitic riots broke out in Nazi Germany and a sudden unexplained paralysis grips the legs of Brooklyn Jewish housewife Sylvia Gellburg. Sylvia Gellburg is a middle-aged American Jewish woman. She is a buxom, capable and warm woman. She had a constrained childhood. While other teenagers were enjoying themselves, she looked after her younger sisters. In scene III, her sister Harriet tells Dr. Hyman, “All her life she did nothing but love everybody!”(519). She loved everyone and “everybody on the block loves” her. At twenty, she was a head book-keeper. After her marriage to Phillip Gellburg, everything changed. She had to leave her job after her first son was born. So she occupied herself with household chores.
Sexual and emotional paralysis between her and her husband results in her physical paralysis. She didn’t have any sexual relations with her husband, because of his impotence. She didn’t want to shame him by consulting a doctor. When she consulted her father, Phillip was outraged. Her husband’s domineering attitude changed her. She could not seek a divorce because that would have killed her mother who loved Phillip. As Harriet, her sister says, “‘. . . it would kill our mother, she worships Phillip, she’d never outlive it’”(518). Sylvia tells Phillip, about the difference in her parents’ house and his in scene II:

Sylvia: … I keep thinking of how I used to be; remember my parents’ house, how full of love it always was? Nobody was ever afraid of anything. But with us, Phillip, wherever I looked there was something to be suspicious about, somebody who was going to take advantage or God knows what. I’ve been tip-toeing around my life for thirty years and I’m not going to pretend – I hate it all now. Everything I did is stupid and ridiculous. I can’t find myself in my life . . . (567)

She is seized with hysterical paralysis in her legs after reading in the newspapers about elderly Jews being forced by the Nazis to scrub the sidewalks with toothbrushes on the Kurfurstendamn in Berlin. She loses the use of her legs and is confined to a wheel chair. The news about the Nazis’ treatment of Jews in Germany evokes horror and fear in Sylvia. She feels that some action must be taken to prevent the spread of such cruelty. Dr. Hyman informs the ill Phillip Gellburg that self-hate is scaring her to death.

Sylvia is affected by these events; perhaps, because she has been victimized by Phillip’s persecution. Miller observes, “The center of my concentration was the
mystery of how this social political dilemma lodged in this woman’s limbs, so to speak, reaching across 3,000 miles of water.” Her humiliation by Philip is reflected in a dream, she reports to Dr. Hyman in act II, scene II, “I’m in a street. Everything is sort of gray. And there’s a crowd of people. They’re packed in all around, but they’re looking for me. A crowd of Germans is chasing her, one of the men catches her, kisses her, and then mutilates her – ‘I think it’s Phillip’” (545). She thinks that Phillip is responsible for her condition to some extent. She informs Dr. Hyman that Phillip gives her terrible dreams.

As Dr. Harry Hyman investigates her condition, he learns of her fears for the Jews, and of her marriage to Phillip whose loathing of his Jewish ancestry was extended not only to his position in a WASP bank, but to their bedroom. Phillip Gellburg, a man in his late forties works for Wanamaker. He is the head of the Mortgage Department of Brooklyn Guarantee Trust. He is an Eastern European Jew who’s tried his utmost to assimilate into American culture. He can’t see the point of worrying about events 3,000 miles away, and he disparages German Jewish immigrants for being snobbish about the kinds of jobs they take. He is one of Miller’s most complex characters in the play. He is a self-hating Jew who at times sounds anti-Semitic. He feels ambiguous about his Jewish identity. “It’s Gellburg, not Goldberg.” He hasn’t been able to accept the fact that he is a Jew. They infuriate him. He is ashamed to look like them. Miller explores the causes for Phillip’s behaviour. He deludes himself into thinking that he’s doing the best for his family even when that means shutting down emotionally. He is capable of ‘Nazi-like’ violence. Once while discussing his impotency, he angrily pulls Sylvia from her chair, due to which she collapses on the floor.
He was more insecure and afraid of being a Jew than his wife Sylvia. His private life too is affected with an irony which is all but unbearable. Though he loves his wife, he is unable to communicate and express himself. He didn’t allow Sylvia to work and have a career because of his insecurity. He wanted to be the ‘man’ of the house. He tried to be “the Rock of Gibraltar,” but wasn’t successful. His insecurity is apparent when he informs Sylvia, “You did not want me to be the man here”(554). His insecurity and his uncommunicative nature widened the already existing distance in their relationship. For quite some time now, they haven’t had any relationship. His wife believed him to be impotent and once tried consulting her father which angered him to a great extent. He believed that he wasn’t impotent but that his wife didn’t want to have any relation with him. In scene VIII, he tells Sylvia that his impotence is a result of her rejection when he refused to allow her to resume the work:

Phillip: That you didn’t want me to be the man here. And then, on top of that when you didn’t want anymore children . . . everything inside me just dried up. And maybe it was also that to me, it was a miracle you ever married me in the first place (554).

He transfers this anxiety to sexual inadequacy. This inadequacy is connected to his identification as a Jew which he tries to suppress. He takes his boss’ disappointment with him over losing a piece of prime real estate as an assault on his Jewishness. He believes that his boss is under the impression that he conspired with a fellow Jew on denying him the property. This perspective combined with his concern for Sylvia results in his heart-attack.

The hatred of himself has become a fear of everything out there, including his wife. At the centre of Silvia’s paralysis lies fear. The play suggests that Phillip’s problem turns out to be the problem of his own crippling self-victimization. The
doctor explains that even Hitler is crippled by self-victimization and, as a result "has turned his whole beautiful country into one gigantic ketch." He struggles to find his true identity not only as man but also as a Jew. Determined to restore both health and marriage for the Gellburgs, Dr. Hyman must strip away yearning, sexual denial, guilt and social injustice if he is to bring the couple face-to-face with themselves. Dr. Harry Hyman is a contrast to Phillip. Hyman is astute enough to realize that Sylvia "knows something. It's like she is connected by a wire of some kind, halfway across the world." Hyman uncovers vital flaws in the Gellburgs relationship giving a further clue to Sylvia's condition. Simultaneously he uncovers the holes in his own marriage. Towards the end of the play, Sylvia admits that she needs to establish her own identity as an individual "wishing, I guess . . . that it had been otherwise" (559). She realizes the harm she has unknowingly done to herself. In act II, Sylvia tells Gellburg, "I'm not blaming you, Phillip. The years I wasted I know I threw away myself. I think I always knew I was doing it but I couldn't stop it" (567). She compares the happy days spent in her parent's house to that of days spent with Phillip Gellburg:

Sylvia: . . . But with us Phillip, whenever I looked there was something to be suspicious about, somebody who was going to take advantage or God knows what. I've been tip-toeing around my life for thirty years and I'm not going to pretend — I hate it now. Everything I did is stupid and ridiculous. I can't find myself in my life (567).

Phillip has a heart attack and is hospitalized. When Sylvia comes to meet him he asks for her forgiveness and promises to change. Sylvia balances herself, rises to her feet, and "takes a faltering step towards her husband" as the play ends. Her
movement is her recognition that she can end her own paralysis and that she has the power to do so.

In the beginning of the play, Sylvia awaits to be born. She remains paralyzed until she reconciles with Phillip, towards the end of the play she is reborn. Like Sylvia, Phillip too is being reborn, as a husband and as a Jew. The characters in the play wrestle above all with their own private demons. They are faced with their painful truths. Hence, they choose denial. However, the protective strategy becomes the source of disabling pain. Miller creates characters whose illusions both sustain and destroy them. The distraught Sylvia repeatedly asks for forgiveness for her incapacity. Her husband begs forgiveness for his insensitivity and the doctor apologizes for his inability to help.

Sylvia's confinement is a symbol of her repressed married life following a constrained childhood. She was not heard by her husband. Her feelings, wants and desires are repressed. This repression manifests itself in extreme behaviour and "she turns against herself." She changes and grows in spite of her desperate condition. Sylvia's change is at the core of Broken Glass. According to Miller, the play is concerned with "a private neurosis." Most of the characters in the play, Broken Glass struggle to make sense of the shifts which occur in private and public life.

Miller's dialogue is precise and economical as in the most of his plays. The play tended to feel more like a recital at times. The play is rich in symbolism. Some of the important images which recur frequently in the play are: newborns, glass, the sea and horse riding. With the help of these images the play's main concern, namely Sylvia's paralysis and her anxiety about the persecution of Jews in Germany, is revealed. Her paralysis can be understood on literal and figurative level. Figuratively it is the emotional paralysis between Phillip and her, and also the sexual paralysis
between them. This can be seen in act I, scene III Sylvia’s paralysis is also seen as metaphor for the inability of the outside world to act against the Nazi persecution of the Jews. The ‘newborn image’ in act I explains Sylvia’s physical paralysis:

   Sylvia: Yes . . . but inside, not on the skin. *Looks at her legs.* I can harden the muscles but I can’t lift them. *Strokes her thighs.* I seem to have an ache. Not only here but . . . *She runs her hands down her trunk.* My whole body seems . . . I can’t describe it. It’s like I was just born and I . . . didn’t want to come out yet. Like a deep, terrible aching . . . (508)

In another scene, the ‘newborn’ image implies that Phillip too is reborn like Sylvia, with a new awareness about himself as a Jew and husband:

   Hyman: If you’re alive you’re afraid; we’re born afraid — a newborn baby is not a picture of confidence; but how you deal with fear, that’s what counts. I don’t think you dealt with it very well (563).

This image is repeated at the climax of the play and Sylvia is reborn symbolically. Images of birth and death, babies and funerals symbolize Sylvia’s rebirth and the death of the marriage between her and Phillip. The “glass” imagery or the “mirror” imagery brings out Phillip’s Nazi-like role in Sylvia’s paralysis:

   Hyman: All right, you want the truth? Do you? Look in the mirror sometime!
   Gellburg: . . . In the mirror!
   Hyman: You hate yourself, that’s what’s scaring her to death. That’s my opinion. How it’s possible I don’t know, but I think you helped paralyze her with this “Jew, Jew, Jew” coming out of

229
your mouth and the same time she reads it in the paper and it’s coming out of the radio day and night? You wanted to know what I think . . . that’s what I think.(565)

This mirror imagery is used again by Phillip, while explaining his discovery about himself to Sylvia.

Phillip: Here I spend a lifetime looking in the mirror at my face!(568)

A well-known critic, David Richard observes that the ‘broken glass’ has a “domestic connotation suggesting a violent fight between spouses and the wreckage of dinnerware flung in fury.” 58 “‘Broken Glass’ refers to the glass at a Jewish wedding ceremony which eventually came to symbolize the fragility of marriage. That’s one piece of my ‘Broken Glass,’” Miller explained. 59 The ‘broken glass’ image refers to Sylvia and Phillip’s marriage, which is being shattered like a glass. ‘Broken Glass’ also refers to Kristallnacht. “Virginity can be another piece of broken glass.” Sylvia is paralyzed from the waist down. She has essentially been a virgin for thirty years. 60

The literal and figurative meaning of Sylvia’s paralysis helps to understand the meaning of Sylvia’s dramatic rising at the end of the play. With reference to this play, John Peter notes that Miller explores the painful bonds between personality, sexuality and maturity with a fearlessness, accuracy and compassion which have no equal in the theatre . . . . This grand, harrowing play deeply compassionate and darkly humorous, is one of the great creations of the American theatre. 61

The Price

Miller wrote The Price 62 in 1967. It shows what happens to a family when the events happened forty years ago come home to roost. The play relates to the
happenings of the Great Crash and the onset of the transformed America of the depression decade. The play also reminds agonizing Vietnam War.

The tension of the drama reveals itself slowly. Victor, a policeman enters the room with a nostalgic air looking about, touching some of the items and finally putting an old laughter record on a vintage victrola. Victor is only forty-nine, having a mid-life crisis, but resigned to life in the slow and unadventurous lane. He forsakes a career as a scientist and becomes a policeman to support his father. From the time he climbs up the stairs in the middle of the apartment and wordlessly wanders around, picking up an object here, winding up an old victrola, twirling a fencing sword from his brief college career to the brutal final scene with Walter, he gives a fully rounded reading of the defeated middle-aged cop. He is not a trusting soul. It is not all that surprising therefore, that Gregory Solomon, the furniture dealer/appraiser feels the need to produce British Navy papers confirming his age to him:

Solomon: . . . There’s my discharge from the British Navy. You see?

‘His Majesty’s Service’ . . . Forget the British Navy. What does it say the date of birth? (34).

Gregory Solomon is prepared to buy the long-ignored furnishings of the Franz house. He has wisdom and wit. He provides both comic relief and philosophical commentary. Solomon is a man who has seen everything, and in some ways is more of a therapist than a furniture dealer. He crackles with wit and happily advises on personal matters. For instance, he gives Victor a piece of advice:

Solomon: . . . – it’s not that you can’t believe nothing, that’s not so hard – it’s that you still got to believe it. That’s hard. And if you can’t do that, my friend – you’re a dead man! (35).
Despite his daughter’s suicide and multiple divorces, Solomon continues to believe in life. His decision to take on this furniture deal infuses him with fresh blood, gives him a new lease on life, a new “possibility.” This estate represents a final chance to be a contender. Until Victor picks his name out of an outdated telephone directory his business has been past history – he is after all, almost ninety. Victor who’s only forty-nine has resigned to life in the slow and unadventurous lane, while Solomon, a one-time acrobat is still willing to take risks. Personal tragedies have not made Solomon crack up. He is Miller’s version of a comic Dionysus – a former acrobat, a man willing, who risked marriage at seventy. Between sly wheedling to prepare for his low bid and just being a loveable old rogue – and part of the fun is that you can’t always tell which is which – he always steals the first half of the play. His prelude to making an offer is both a rationalization for his price, which he is agonizingly slow to name, a discourse on many important truths of life. The whole thing is a viewpoint. “It’s a mental world,” Gregory tells Victor.

Victor just wants to be rid of the reminders of too many years of putting aside his own ambitions to support the broken man, his father. In act I, Victor explains “I was very good in science – I loved it. But I had to drop out to feed the old man” (43). And so he joins the force to get through the depression. He sacrifices his career dreams to support his father but his virtue has brought the additional cost of resentment and the crippling inability to move forward when given the opportunity. Even when Victor takes responsibility for his decision to help his father, he reveals that his life has evolved in a way, he had never predicted. Victor confesses to Solomon:

... it’s that you’ve got to make decisions before you know what’s involved, but you’re struck with the results anyway. Like I was very
good in science — I loved it. . . . We always agreed, we stay out of the
rat race and live our own life. That was important. But you shovel the
crap out the window, it comes back in under the door — it all ends up
she wants, she wants. And I can’t really blame her — there’s no respect
for anything but money(43).

When Solomon inquires what Victor got against money, Victor answers: “Nothing, I
just didn’t want to lay down my life for it”(43). In an emotional outburst, he reveals
why he could not desert his father, blamed by his mother and abandoned by his
brother.

He realizes that his father “couldn’t believe in anybody any more”(88). He is
aware that his sacrifice was unnecessary in a material sense, that his father was not the
victim. Victor tries to rationalize his father’s behaviour by believing that he “was
ashamed to go into the street!”(83). He tries to rationalize by shifting the blame on
him. “You had a responsibility here and you walked out on it”(83).

Seeing his father’s failure, he chooses the noncompetitive job of a civil
servant. He tries to restore his father’s belief in human solidarity which his marriage
and the Depression had shattered. Elder Franz was psychologically immobilized when
his prosperous business was wiped out by the market crash of 1929. This crash
psychologically paralyzed him. His success ended in disaster. He lost everything. His
own wife and son desert him at the time of need. And so his father now could not
believe in anybody any more.

Victor’s wife, Esther enters shortly and their conversation fills in the
background for the story. They have come here to meet with an antique dealer in
order to dispose of Victor’s father’s furniture. Victor’s relationship with Esther is not
comfortable. Victor’s wife Esther hates her life to the point of drinking too much, she
wants Victor to be more aggressive, and yet she loves him. She sees the furniture as a window of opportunity to have a more meaningful life, more financial comforts and more prestige than being the wife of a cop.

The house in which the seeds of their estrangement were planted is torn down. So Victor tries to contact Walter, his brother about disposing of the contents of the attic apartment in which they lived after their father lost his fortune during the 30s Depression. Victor and Walter Franz have been living in different worlds for many years, one a police sergeant, the other a wealthy surgeon.

Victor has tried calling Walter, so that they could decide about the house and the furniture. But every time he calls Walter isn’t there and so he leaves messages for him. Getting no response from Walter, Victor has taken matters into his own hands. But just as he agrees to the price offered by the wily old appraiser, Walter shows up and the brothers are face to face for the first time since their father's death sixteen years ago. Les Gutman in his review observes that The Price “focuses on familial relationships.”

Threads of old hurts, resentment and disappointed dreams begins to surface.

Walter, seeing the father as more selfish than needy, goes his own way and later, wanting his brother to see through the illusion of the father’s neediness, refuses Victor’s plea for a modest loan, causing the final rift in an already fragile relationship. Walter’s expensive leather gloves and beige camel’s hair coat epitomize the ‘money machine’ Walter allows himself to become. (He even remarks that the coat is worth ‘two gall stone operations’).

Walter tries to justify his stand; he felt that Victor and father both needed each other more than anything else. His father’s selfishness was obvious to him but Victor seemed never to notice it. Walter wasn’t indifferent, he even called up to offer the
loan, but his father dissuaded him, "he made it impossible." He tries justifying and lessening his guilt by revealing that he had phoned their father to offer to pay the tuition fees (a message never delivered), insisting that his brother should not join the police force and waste his "fine mind." He feels some responsibility for his brother's lost opportunities; it is evident from his offer to Victor of an administrative post in his hospital. Victor was hurt as Walter hadn't called nor had made any attempt to get in touch. This was not the only thing that kept Victor from accepting Walter’s attempt at reconciliation:

Esther: Oh, what the hell — I’ll say it. When he went to you, Walter, for the five hundred he needed to get his degree –

Victor: Esther! There’s no –

Esther: It’s one of the things standing between you, isn’t it? Maybe Walter can clear it up. I mean . . . Good God, is there never to be an end? (78)

Victor believes that Walter doesn’t want to give him the money. And that is one of the things standing between them. He has asked for a loan from Walter which is refused by his brother. He feels that Walter's guilt conscious is making him give him a job in the administration. He believes that his brother Walter is selfish. When Walter offers him a job, he refuses. He tries to rationalize saying that circumstances determine actions. Walter is convinced that Victor has invented a fiction of their lives in order to justify his life and make it bearable:

Walter: We invent ourselves, Vic, to wipe out what we know. You invent a life of self-sacrifice, a life of duty: but what never existed here cannot be upheld. You were not upholding something, you were denying what you knew they were. And
denying yourself . . . We’re brothers. It was only two seemingly different roads put of the same Trap . . . (90).

Walter views the neglected old homestead and everything in it as a symbol of the family’s neglect of nurturing loving relationships. His father’s disaster motivates Walter to succeed which leads to his breakdown. In act II, Walter tries to explain to Victor and Esther how he changed himself after he began his career:

Walter: . . . You start out wanting to be the best . . . the time comes when you realize that you haven’t merely been specializing in something — something has been specializing in you . . . And the whole thing comes down to fear (69).

Having had to face some painful truths about his own life, Walter has succeeded in evoking a confession from Victor even though he only “partly” admits it. Walter bears burden of the guilt for deserting his father to pursue a career, and of not helping Victor when he was able to do so. For the past thirty years, he tried to prevent the kind of catastrophe his father suffered subsequently Walter learned a painful truth:

Walter: I only got out alive when I saw that there was no catastrophe, there never had been (90).

He has the difficult job of convincing the others, that he is not the monster of his brother’s memory.

Walter and Victor gradually strip away each other’s illusions and rationalizations about the past as their old Manhattan brownstone is about to be torn like Cherry Orchard. The characters of the play face problems of personal nature and they seek to resolve them at the personal level. As soon as one brother has justified his behaviour he is undercut by the other’s opposing interpretation. The furniture sale works organically to stir memories to set up the big confrontation. The
primary force driving The Price was a tangle of memories of people. The conflict of how to divide the proceeds cuts open the long buried lives of both men and that of Victor's wife Esther and reveals the choices each has made and the price each has paid.

The setting is also symbolic. The apartment is cluttered with furniture and family memorabilia, an apt mirror of the old resentments and illusions in each man's mind. The brothers meet in the family attic for the first time in over a decade as it is about to be symbolically knocked down. This allows Miller to explore their lives and the divergence of paths. As a result, we see self-delusion changing to self-knowledge with remarkable rapidity. The dusty contents of the room, far from being a mere symbol of the past, are made into means of illuminating the present.

The title too has a dual meaning. According to Arthur Miller, "Whatever you do, whatever trade-offs you make; there is always a "price." Victor sacrificed a promising career in science to support his father. Walter, seeing the father as more selfish than needy, went his own way and later, wanting his brother to see through the illusion of the father's neediness, refused Victor's plea for a modest loan — causing the final rift in an already fragile relationship."64

The play leads us to react against Walter, and then slowly reveals Victor's culpability. Miller has been able to lay bare the oppressive and anti-human value system of the society. The characters are shown as grappling on the one hand with the changed realities of American life and the trauma they entail and on the other hand, with the psychic conflicts of personal origin. These conflicts and the traumas become too pronounced at a particular point of time in their life and their ability to hold their feelings under repression gives way. Writing of The Price, Miller states:
In the militancy of the sixties . . . I saw the seeds of a coming new disillusionment. Once again we were looking almost completely outside for salvation from ourselves . . . the play and life seemed to be telling me that we were doomed to perpetuate our illusions because truth was too costly to face. At the end of the play Gregory Solomon . . . finds an old laughing record and, listening to it, starts laughing uncontrollably, nostalgically, brutally, having come closer to acceptance rather than denial of the deforming betrayals of time. 65

The Price indicates Miller's return to the tightly structured family drama of psychological realism and his repeated theme of guilt and personal responsibility. 66

The Last Yankee

The Last Yankee, 67 written in 1990s is about two marriages under strain by the differing needs and perceptions of those who once thought they shared so much. John Peter has noted that no other American playwright has written with such power and unrighteous, uncensorious understanding about marriage under stress; the constant need for independence and reassurance, domination and comfort; the hopeless, helpless, battered affection people can feel for someone close but unreachable; the need to speak and the fear of being either heard or unheard. 68

The Last Yankee exposes our ignorance about depression and opens up a new male perspective in our understanding of this crippling illness. This play shows how the characters cope with depression in their own unique way. The play opens up some of the psycho-moral paradoxes haunting contemporary life.
The setting is in a State mental institution where two men visit their depressed wives. The play comprises several scenes. The first scene has two men comparing notes on the chronic depression of their wives whom they are visiting in a State institution. The story takes place around the 1960 in the New England area. Two men are sitting in the waiting room of a State mental institution; they are there to visit their wives who are both suffering from depression. Frick, a no-nonsense successful businessman is shocked to find that the young man Leroy Hamilton though descended from one of the Founding Fathers of the USA is a carpenter by profession and a fairly contented one to boot. Leroy deliberately avoids the trappings of American success.

Leroy Hamilton’s wife Patricia was a homemaker before being in the mental institution. She was driven into depression by her husband’s insistent rejection of the American Dream. She had been in the institute twice already within the fifteen years of her falling out. This was the third time she was in the institute and she was improving. She spoke to Karen about her life in Sweden, about how her family was full of beautiful people. Her mother’s beauty was everlasting until she died at eighty one. She herself had won the county beauty pageant when she was nineteen. She absorbed the lies told to children at the doors of log cabins. She came from a family of immigrants. About Patricia, a well-known critic Richard Corliss wrote, “In the wonderful character of Patricia Hamilton, we hear a troubled soul having a chat with herself . . . She seeks release from the ghosts of her golden youth. But wry or wistful, she speaks with the reckless lucidity of someone liberated from drugs and intoxicated by the impending peril of real life.” She sees life as a competition in which her husband refuses to participate. The keynote of her life is disappointment, a word which echoes in the text and which becomes both a symptom for and an explanation of the depression from which she and so many others suffer. Her retreat to the mental
hospital is the equivalent of her brother's suicide. She is drawn to religion as a solution to her sense of despair, albeit a vaguely focused and contaminated religion. Indeed the contamination underscores the material dimension of America's spiritual ideal. Behind the clinical depression from which Patricia and the other women suffer is that other Depression which haunts Miller's plays; for what they see in their own apparent decline and their failure to realize the promise which America made, is the collapse of a promise which is intimately connected with their sense of themselves.

Her failure is more fundamental. It is a failure to acknowledge and to offer love, a failure to see that lives are justified and identity affirmed not by material success, competitive ruthlessness or personal charm, but by exhibiting a commitment to others and to oneself built out of some thing more substantial than mere appearance. In a conversation with Patricia her husband Leroy says, "We are in this world and you're going to have to find some ways to love it!"(480). She has to stop becoming in order to be. She has to realize that she is holding her life in her own hands and cease to live provisionally. She doesn't appreciate the marriage partner as a "treasured" individual. She is aware that whenever she downgrades him their marriage suffers. Her task is to accept both herself and her husband for what they are. The play is about Patricia Hamilton as an individual rather than the Hamiltons as a couple.

Karen Frick, wife of John Frick was too vulnerable to live with her husband dedicated to his pursuit. She was a real-estate agent before being institutionalized. She had a nervous breakdown as she had alienated the outer world from herself. She locked herself at home and would not go out and subsequently she became depressive. She told Patricia how she was afraid to get up in the night and was afraid of waking Frick up as he needed his sleep for appointments the next day. She hates hunting and
fishing trips, still she accompanies her husband on fishing trips even though "the sight of catfish makes [her] want to vomit" (465). She wants something immaterial like consideration. In scene II, Patricia suggests to Frick, "She's got to feel treasured, you see" (482). Under her domineering husband, her repression manifests itself in extreme behaviour. She develops a depression so deep that she is confined in an institution. This confinement is a symbol of a repressed married life. She changes and grows tentatively; she takes up tap dancing to express herself. Although she has been emotionally battered by her boorish husband, her inner spirit remains untarnished. She finds a sanctuary in tap-dancing, an incongruous avocation for such a seemingly fragile person. In the play's most touching scene, she puts on her dancing costume and taps to the tune of "Swanee." As she dances, her face lights up and for a moment we receive a picture of a liveliness that has been long suppressed. The sudden interruption of the song is deflating; she is crushed as if the only door of escape has been bolted.

Both Patricia and Karen seem to have been broken by the failure of experience to match their needs and aspirations. The women recoil from life, disappointed and bewildered. In each story, the husband would seem to bear much of the responsibility for his wife's depression. Towards the end of the play, Leroy's wife Patricia has kicked her anti-depressants and feels better than she was in years. Karen Frick may be paralyzed by such decisions like where to do her grocery shopping, but her new interest in tap-dancing is a beacon of pure joy. But as soon as the husbands come for their visits Leroy and Patricia snarl at each other about money and ambition. John Frick scorns his wife's dancing before agreeing to sing "Swanee River" to accompany her. The play concludes with the spotlight on the fifth character, a woman who has been too immobilized to move from her bed or utter a sound.
The play tries to diagnose a broader American “disappointment” and a sense of “failure” through the narrow and generic focus of two women suffering from depression and the self-absorbed husbands who aren’t much help. The play focuses on the self-entrapment of the characters. John Peter in his review of the play observes that The Last Yankee is a hard, dark elegy of American life, a pensive diagnosis, a requiem with a fugitive bass-note of hope. 71

As Leroy says to Patricia, “we are in this world and you’re going to have to find some way to love it”(480). The Last Yankee is a plea not for resignation but acceptance.

4.6 Conclusion

As discussed in the introduction of this chapter Miller was one of the many writers of the 40s and 50s who regularly turned to psycho-analytic methodology to depict the inner thoughts of characters. Miller felt the need for theatrical idiom to address social and political concerns in the 50s. So he used Expressionism. His plays depict private and public issues. They probe into the inner world of private relations and emotions. All the plays discussed in this chapter have been analyzed from the psychological perspective.

Miller’s Death of a Salesman is a fine example of subjective realism. The use of subjective realism in the play solved a specific aesthetic problem, the dramatization of the protagonist’s disintegrating mind in the context of his families, and the larger society’s response to that disintegration. Willy invites the audience to enter “the inside of his head” the original working title of the play. In effect, the audience becomes privy to the crisis within Willy and to the philosophic complexity of Death
of a Salesman. Willy Loman’s real condition lies in his insecurity in the universe, his profound sense of being unfulfilled, and his inability to observe his own emotional speed limits. No one had dramatized the inner life of a character as Miller did in Death of a Salesman. The technique is commonplace now, but it is not only the technique of flashback of dramatizing events from the past so much as skillful interweaving of memory and reality. In this way Miller found a way to explode the chronological framework of conventional realism and substitute it with the subjective reality of a continual present. Miller attempted to extend the limits of conventional realism.

Another most subjective play of Miller is After the Fall. This play is set within Quentin’s head. The process of After the Fall is designed to restore to the individual a sense of control, to reassert a moral responsibility. In After the Fall, the highly effective present tense scenes are undermined not just by the presence of an imagined listener to the protagonist’s memorial soliloquies, but by a Nazi death camp watch tower casting its shadow over the stage.

Miller returned to the theme with Broken Glass. The effect of Kristallnacht on a New York Jewish couple is dramatized not by symbolic or memorial devices but by psychotherapy (another late Miller motif); the untangling of personal and political traumas is no less painful than in After the Fall but more complex and more believable.

Broken Glass is concerned with a public concern and a private neurosis. On one level, they meet in the mind of a woman shocked into paralysis. It is a play which simultaneously explores the dangerous and redeeming comprises of personal life and the wider issues which make the world we inhabit such a terrifying and sometimes such a hopeless place.
Psychic aberrations and insight into the psychology of desperation is very much evident in A View from the Bridge. In A View from the Bridge (1955), Eddie Carbone, a longshoreman is horrified when he is confronted with the reality of his semi-conscious passion. Eddie’s passion commits him to a fatal course of action. In A View from the Bridge Miller probed the psychological and dramatic dimensions of Eddie Carbone, the informer who “ratted” on his illegal alien relatives. Eddie tries to bridge and accommodate disparate and not always conscious of psychological feelings.

In The Crucible Miller portrays the theme of individual guilt in the moral lapse of its protagonist. He also brings out the evil of depression and witch hunting to which several innocent individuals fall victim. There are instances of herd mentality which heighten the climate of fear to a peak of hysteria. Questions of guilt and individual responsibility persist in Miller’s later drama.

In The Last Yankee like any other Depression plays, Miller has depicted the psychological and emotional collapse of an individual. The play depicts the frustration caused by unfulfillment of the American Dream. Patricia and Karen in The Last Yankee trade a boundary line not so much between sanity and insanity as between two different worlds, that of myth and that of reality, that of desire and that of fact. The play links private and public worlds by connecting personal desperation to insane American values. In The Price two brothers confront memories of the Great Depression. Miller remained dedicated to exploring the psyche of characters whose actions had consequences.

Much of the success of All My Sons has to do with Miller’s complex vision of the Keller’s shared guilt and complicity in the family’s collapse. Miller’s greatest strength is in his penetrating insight into familial relationships. He has depicted the
disturbed families and disturbed people due to the impact of rampant materialism and the struggle for dignity in a dehumanizing world. There are portraits of erosion of the family structure. Embattled fathers, sons and competitive brothers, all guilt-ridden, must atone for their betrayals. Willy Loman, Miller's most famous guilty father like Joe Keller in All My Sons commits suicide thereby completing the disfiguring role model he has bequeathed to his sons. He presents psychological study of guilt, repression and psychosis. Individual guilt often unfolds in Miller's plays against momentous backdrops: for example, the Depression, the Holocaust and the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) investigations of the 1950s constitute the thematic backdrop of Miller's plays. Though for Miller, theatre served as a forum for social and political enlightenment he probed into the inner world of man with intense conviction and zeal.

Arthur Miller's plays depict psychic aberrations, exhibit insights into the psychology of desperation and finally reflect his ability to create stories that express the deepest meanings of struggle which have made him one of the most highly regarded and widely performed American dramatists.

Chapter Notes


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5 Ibid., 588.

6 Ibid., 589.

7 Ibid., 591.


12 Ibid., 106.

13 M. Rajeshwar, "Fiction and Neurosis," 2.

14 Sigmund Freud, New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, 98.


16 Guyou Reve, The Ethics of sexual Acts, p. 27.

17 Jonathan Winson, Brain and Psyche, 136.

18 M. Rajeshwar, "Fiction and Neurosis," 2.


24 Ibid., 19.

25 Steven Centola, “All My Sons,” 57.


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32 Barbara Lounsberry, “The Expressionistic Devices in Death of a Salesman,” www.yahoo.com

<http://www.lincoln.leon.k12.fl.us/media/menu/APreadings/Expressionistic.doc> 03/04/04, 11-12.


34 Ronald Hayman, Death of a Salesman, Arthur Miller 36.


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49 Arthur Miller, After the Fall (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965). All references are to this text are from this edition.

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71 John Peter, Sunday Times (14 Aug. 1994).