PREFACE

Arthur Miller belongs to a genre that was simultaneously rooted in contemporary American milieu and emerged from this subsoil to assert the enduring and abiding individuality of his creations. The present study is an exploratory probing into his dramatic world. Critics have successfully searched for psychological, sociological, mythical and technical insights into Miller’s plays. The purpose of this study extends beyond what has already been stated about the playwright. It concentrates upon Miller’s delineation of a tangible human image which is a blending of the contemporary, timeless and mythical vision of man.

Miller’s protagonist, like his counterparts from the world of writers like O’Neill and Crane, launches himself on a quest for identity, awareness and self-knowledge. Consigned to a preordained success-oriented society, the individual experiences the sense of being "trapped." The feeling is enhanced when there is a corresponding reciprocation within his own psyche. Mistakenly he takes refuge in a choice which logically entails a conflict. The struggle eventually assumes gigantic proportions because it transforms itself into a mortal combat between the forces of destiny that are hell bent on subjugating the human being, and the forces of affirmation which are a necessary adjunct to the experience of tragedy.
My analysis of Miller’s plays traces his concept of that human image of positivity and affirmation which emerges from the individual’s battle for existence. The individual who may have lived a life of "biological trapping" is rewarded with redemption after having been chastened by external and internal forces.

The plays selected for analysis and their thematic relevance provide a concentration of experiences where the protagonist is viewed as interacting in a singularly human fashion. The family becomes an extended metaphor supplying him with the background, anchor and prop. The most prominent among the plays excluded from this study are *After the Fall* and *The Misfits* primarily on account of their deeply psychological, technical and autobiographical nature.

The study comprises eight chapters. Chapter I introduces the reader to the existing available scholarship on Arthur Miller. It also sums up the essential tenets of his theory of playwriting. The six chapters which follow contain a detailed analysis of six of his major plays. Beginning with *All My Sons*, which deals with the subject of individual guilt, personal responsibility and perception in its final stages, the succeeding two chapters entitled *Death of a Salesman* and *The Crucible* deal with the individual vis-a-vis the current topical situation in America. The salesman
myth, the success cult, and the McCarthy hysteria become leit-motifs. Chapter V deals with the relatively unnoticed *A Memory of two Mondays* which, unlike the earlier plays does not have a single protagonist but distributes its emphasis on a group. The clique is representative of the tired, battered, jaded mentality of defeated people. However, the resultant image is again positive. *A View from the Bridge*, analysed in Chapter VI, repeats the tormented struggle of the protagonist viewed in *The Crucible* and Chapter VII. *The Price* reasserts the significance of the family syndrome. The conclusion sums up the cross currents of ideas in the preceding chapters, coalesces them into the final archetypal dimensions of any Sophoclean hero.

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Aligarh

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