CHAPTER II
ARTHUR MILLER

Arthur Asher Miller was a prominent American playwright and essayist, a prominent figure in American theatre. In 1965, Miller was elected the first American president of International PEN, an international organization of writers dedicated to human rights, a position which he held for four years. In 2001, the National Endowment for the Humanities selected Miller for the Jefferson Lecture, the United States federal government’s highest honour for achievement in the humanities. Miller’s career as a writer spanned over seven decades. Thus he was considered to be one of the greatest dramatists of the twentieth century.

Arthur Miller grew up during the years of the Depression in America. His dramas of guilt, betrayal, and redemption, dramas of social conscience were drawn from life and informed by the great depression. Miller belonged to that generation deeply affected by the Wall Street Crash of 1929. His father, a wealthy New York garment manufacturer, lost everything in the crash. It was the depression that gave him a deep understanding of man’s insecurity in modern industrial civilization, his deep-rooted belief in social responsibility, and his moral earnestness. His plays show a sympathetic understanding of ordinary employments. Miller’s major works are All My Sons, Death of a Salesman, The Crucible, A View From the Bridge, The Misfits, After the Fall, Incident at Vichy, The Price, Broken Glass, and many other plays. All show Miller’s own sense of involvement with modern man’s struggle to be himself. The plays of Miller are never devoid of social context. So Miller feels that the protagonist of the drama must be a part of meaningful social relationships. The play should depict the interaction between the individual and society.

The American style for theatre was defined and distinguished from the end of the World War II till the early 1960 by prominent playwrights such as Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams. It was the most significant period in the history of American drama. These playwrights were often interested in exploring social issues such as the human costs of post war industrial capitalism and the
contradictory nature of the American dream, and many other themes regarding the individual, family, and society are explored in their writings.\(^{(1)}\) Miller’s dramas deal mainly with man’s relationship with his family and society. The relationship between a man’s identity and the image that society demands of is a recurring theme in his plays. Each of his heroes is involved, in one way or another, in a struggle that results from his acceptance or rejection of an image that is the product of his society’s values and prejudices.

Arthur Miller rejects the conventional component that the tragic subject must be royals and kings. He believes that the common man is as apt as kings were to be a subject for tragedy in its highest sense. For that he turns to tragedies of common man. To reinforce his new literary dimension, he placed and explored many reasons. According to him the tragic feeling is evoked in us to secure one thing, one’s sense of personal dignity and the character is ready to lay down his life for that. He says:

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\text{Tragedy, then, is the consequence of man’s total compulsion to evaluate himself justly.}\quad \text{\(^{(2)}\)}
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He mentions that, plays of this kind may take another turn, the fear factor, the fear of being displaced, torn away from our chosen image of what and who we are in this world. In fact, nowadays fear is stronger than it was and it is the common man who knows this fear best. He also explores that the tragic right is a condition of life, a condition in which the human personality is able to flower and realize itself. Here tragedy enlightens and points the heroic finger at the enemy of man’s freedom. So he strongly converted to the tragedy of common man.

Around 1960, Arthur Miller tried to compose a play about remorseful atomic physicists. He recalls in his autobiography, \textit{Timebends}:

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\ldots\text{ever since Hiroshima I had been thinking about a play that would deal with the atom bomb. Now, fifteen years later, it was less a feeling of guilt than of wonder at having approved the catastrophe that moved me to investigate first hand how the scientists themselves felt about what they had created.}\quad \text{\(^{(3)}\)}}
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The play was to explore the dilemma of science. But to be interesting, it should be horrifying. Hence, he stopped the attempt.

The most important fact about his plays is the social realism based upon the relationship of the individual to society as a continuous and inseparable process—not as separate units. Arthur Miller comes nearer to this conception than any other post-war writer. He has written on such contemporary themes as the social accountability of business, the forms of the success-ethic, intolerance and thought-control, and the nature of the modern work-relations. That is because he wants to distinguish his work from the ordinary sociological problem-play. His characters are aspects of the way of life, for instance, in Death of a Salesman Linda says about Willy Loman:

_He’s a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him._
_So attention must be paid .......... attention, attention must be finally paid to such a person._

(4)

Most of his plays emerge from real images. The origin of his characters is the real, contemporary world of today. They face problems, predicaments and situations, which a common man might face and confront in America today. His plays are realistic, naturalistic and expressionistic. The central issue of Miller’s plays is the struggle of the individual trying to gain his rightful position in his society and his family. Miller’s plays are concerned with rebellious sons, betrayed fathers, simple workers and the like. Images and metaphors are used to explain his essential theme to show the gap between the private life and the social life. He addressed social issues that facing America at the time in order to encourage Americans who were depressed and affected by the Two World Wars and the Great Depression. He addressed those who thought that great depression was the end of the world. He addressed whatever may become American tragedy; hence, he influenced American social life.

In All My Sons we get the idea of a man in the powerful grip of ambition, betraying society. Miller draws up an indictment of the society too for he suggests that it is the pressures of materialist society that guided Keller in making a choice.
that is anti-social. He could have admitted to the government the fact that the cylinders he supplied them were faulty. But to do so would be to lose the prestige of his business. Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* is also influenced in everything by society and success in terms of social evaluation. It is the central point of Miller’s social philosophy that society and the individual are inextricably linked.

Arthur Miller supports and participates in the civil rights struggle. He famously opposes the Vietnam War. Most recently, he criticizes the United States invasion of Iraq of George W. Bush, Miller said:

*He’s not a very good actor. He’s too obvious most of the time, he has no confidence in his own façade, so he’s constantly overemphasizing his sincerity.*

In the sixties, he didn’t write directly about Vietnam or civil rights. But he became involved in the anti-war movement and applauded the student protest. He saw democracy threatened as in the 40s and 50s but he found similarity between the 60s and the 30s and wondered whether America grows in this way or she slowly dies. He found that America was refusing to face its national self-deception, he felt that such denial was all that remained to reveal.

In this chapter, three of Miller’s plays, *Death of a Salesman*, *All My Sons*, and *Broken Glass* will be discussed and analyzed from the cultural mutation point of view.

*Death of a Salesman* (1949), previously named by Miller *The Inside of His Head*, presents conflicting views and warring narratives and it is called a cultural treasure. By the adulterous father, the marginalized mother, wayward children, a family’s battles to pay bills, unemployment, the child’s quest, spite, loss, felt but unexpressed love, guilt and shame, self-reliance that the audience sees himself, his parents, or his children in the play. As David Mamet says to Miller, “*that is my story – not only did you write it about me, but I could go up on stage right now and act it.*” *Death of a Salesman* is not merely a drama of domestic quarrels between a father and his sons, a drama of conflict between capitalism and
communism, between self and soul, between psyche and conscience, between a salesman and a manufacturer, but of a conflict between the individual and society, a conflict between man’s values and his environment. The playwright was trying in the play to set forth what happens when a man does not have a grip on the forces of life and has no sense of values which will lead him to that kind of a grip.

Is the play reflecting the personal problem of Miller whose earlier years were spent in the Great Depression, and who therefore could never trust American capitalism? The play contains some autobiographical elements. Miller’s father lost his business in the Great Depression and was blamed by his son for an inability to cope with these changes. On the contrary, John S. Shockley says:

Death of a Salesman still resonates powerfully in American life and culture and that in a fascinating and chilling way life has imitated drama. 

Miller creates a Marxian view of American culture in the Depression era. He describes Willy as a childlike victim of the cultural values he adopts virtually without question.

The American dream faded by the Depression of the 1930s so that illusions on the national psyche are not clearly denied. Death of a Salesman is not set during the Depression but it bears its mark. If personal meaning and worth lie in success, then identity must be threaten by failure. It tells of a salesman who sells nothing but himself. Willy Loman is kin to Miller’s salesman uncle, Manny Newman. Miller writes, “In a sense, these men lived like artists, like actors whose product is first of all themselves, forever imagining triumph in a world that either ignores them or denies their presence altogether.” Willy Loman wants to be well liked, for, without that, he fears he will be nothing at all.

Arthur Miller’s play Death of a Salesman addresses loss of identity and a man’s inability to accept change within himself and society around him. Miller uses the Loman family – Willy, Linda, Biff, and Happy- to construct a self denial, contradiction, and order versus disorder. Through the play Miller shows how a single event, Willy’s infidelity 15 years ago, can define individuals and how they
attempt to disguise and eradicate the event. The realization that Willy is unfaithful to Linda forces Biff to re-evaluate Willy and he realizes that Willy has created a false image of himself for his family.

Americanism is a salient quality of Miller’s tragedy of the common man Death of a Salesman. The New York reviewer sees Willy as the representative of a large segment of American society. Thomas E. Porter says:

... he [Willy] is also representative of an American type, the salesman, who has accepted an ideal shaped for him and passed on him by forces in his culture. (9)

It is still some indefinite future. Meanwhile he is a salesman, travelling but never arriving.

This play is the story of all human beings who find themselves disintegrated and isolated in the cruel language of postmodern and consumer world. It tries to show the entrapped modern man who finds the postmodern language weird and its values as resisting forces against the fossilized metanarratives. This play is about the paradoxes of being alive in a technological society; it is about the sense of isolation brought by technological advance and the price people pay for progress. It is a tale about individual suppression by placing him below the overbearing needs of a capitalist society. It is a play about a man who kills himself because he is not liked. It is said that:

Death of a Salesman, really, is a love story between a man and his son and in a crazy way between both of them and America. (10)

The play deals with various elements such as fall of the Grand narratives, disintegration of family ties, failure of the American Dream, distance between illusion and reality, the sense of isolation, lack of understanding, and the struggle for being. Death of a Salesman is a proclamation of the end of Enlightenment and Grand narratives. Willy’s sense of needing love and respect causes him to dedicate his life to the eternal American quest of a transformed tomorrow. Robinson in Nietzsche and Postmodernism (2000) states:
Our postmodern world seems very likely to become one of spiritual emptiness and cultural superficiality, in which social practices are endlessly repeated and parodied, a fragmented world of alienated individuals with no sense of self or history, tuned into a thousand different TV channels. This is certainly the vision of both present and future offered to us by the postmodernist Jean Baudrillard. For him, this postmodern world is one of simulacra in which there is no longer any difference between reality and surface. Modern citizens will not be ‘Overpeople’ – just consumers of media in a world of signs without signifiers. (11)

All My Sons marked the real beginning of a career dominating Post-War American theatre. Miller was concerned with the moral life by exploring the question of guilt and innocence. The play itself serves as a link between the past and the present and a demonstration of the extent to which the past affects and shapes the present. Its contrast between human values and a distorted commercialism made it one of the most successful plays. Miller identifies the connection between past and present, the individual and his society, action and consequences. It explores that the desire for a world at moral attention carries its own dangers. Bigsby observes that All My Sons is a play about our ability to connect with others and the world around us as well as about our success or failure at achieving such a connection:

This is a play about betrayal, about fathers and sons, about America, about self-deceit, about self-righteousness, egotism presented as idealism, about a fear of morality, about guilt, about domestic life as evasion, about the space between appearance and reality, about suspect nature of language, about denial, about repression, about a kind of despair finessed into hope, about money, about an existence resistant to our needs, about a wish for innocence when, as Miller was later to say in his autobiography, innocence kills, about a need for completion, about the gulf between the times we live in and the people we wish to believe ourselves to be, about the fragility of what we take to be reality, about time as enemy and time as moral force and so on... (12)
At the time, Miller wrote *All My Sons*, he did witness the Second World War and was fully aware of the crimes against humanity evident in the Holocaust.

Miller’s first successful play *All My Sons* may be briefly described as the idea of guilt from the past permeating and destroying the present. The guilty protagonist is Joe Keller, an industrialist who, during the war supplied the government with a batch of faulty cylinder heads. When these brought about the death of twenty one pilots, Keller committed the second crime of putting all the blame on his innocent manager Deever. Deever goes to jail and Keller prospers. But the success of Keller is not lasting. The climax of the play is the suicide of his son in the army, on hearing the new’s of his father’s crime. And Keller stripped of his sentimental defenses, kills himself. The complications that Keller’s crime brings about the betrayal and the suffering of the innocent are vividly drawn by Miller.

The conception of the relationship of the individual to society is the key to social realism. But both are seen as belonging to inseparable process. Miller has restored active social criticism to the drama and has written on such contemporary themes as the social accountability of business, the forms of the successes-ethic, intolerance and through-control, the nature of modern work-relations. He has seen these problems as living issues to distinguish his work from ordinary sociological problem-play. There is a complexity of the fact that a son replaces his father because of dependence and the growth of independence regarding the business-ethic and both are necessary. It is shown in this play that the roots of guilt are in both the father and the son stand together as men. The father is a model as well as a rejected ideal whereas the son is an idea and a relative failure. As Raymond Williams points out:

*One way of looking at “All My Sons” is in these universal terms: the father, in effect, destroys one of his sons, and that son, in his turn, gives sentence of death on him, while at the same time, to the other son, the father offers a future, and the son, in rejecting it, destroys his father, in pain and love.* \(^{(13)}\)
As it is in the *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman like Joe Keller has lived for his sons who reject him and in effect destroy him. Yet the failure on both sides is rooted in love and dependence. So their relationship is characterized by the aspects of death and love. Often Miller called it most Ibsenain play, *All My Sons* imitates Ibsen’s conception of drama in which “the past reaches the present, usually destructively, but leaving some illumination behind.”¹⁴ The self-denial here reflects the effects of innocence as a theme.

*Broken Glass* was written in 1994. It took place in Brooklyn in the last few days of 1938. The plot follows Phillip and Sylvia Gelburg who are a Jewish married couple living in New York. Sylvia suddenly becomes partially paralysed from the waist down after reading about the events of Kristallnacht in the newspaper. Kristallnacht—translated as The Night of Broken Glass was the coordinated Nazi attack on Jewish people and their property and the humiliation of Jewish community in Germany. Old men in the city are put to work cleaning the sidewalks with toothbrushes. Miller’s play examines how these two situations mirror each other. Sylvia Gellburg in her wheelchair, is an exact image of the paralysis everyone showed in the face of Hitler especially the American Jewish community.¹⁵

*Broken Glass* becomes a psychological and spiritual detective story. The debilitating paralysis embodies the composite guilt shared by the characters. It represents public and private, corporate and individual betrayals. Both Phillip Gelburg, her husband, and Dr. Harry Hyman, suspect that Sylvia’s condition is related to her obsession with the news of Nazi atrocities during Kristallnacht. Miller wrote about the Jewish experience in America. The fact is that she has other problems which center on her husband, a successful businessman who feels ambiguously about his Jewish identity and deeply insecure about his sexuality.

America itself was still in the grip of the Depression. Sylvia's fate is in the hands of a doctor. What is at stake, however, is not just Sylvia's health but the survival of all the play's characters as they struggle to make sense of the radical
shifts which seem to be occurring in private and public life. Is it possible that someone should be physically affected by outside events? Since writing the play Miller himself has stumbled on the fact that there was indeed an unusual amount of physical paralysis among Jews in America while recent evidence points to a high incidence of hysterical blindness among Cambodian women following the horrors perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. Miller offers an image of that paralysis of the spirit which is a fact of personal lives as much as of national policy. \(^{(16)}\) This fascinating and disturbing insight into a horrific and thought-provoking occurrence offers a fresh look at how momentous historical events can shape the lives of ordinary people all around the world. In Miller’s world, a refusal of responsibility is ultimately a refusal of humanity. Ignoring responsibilities, either personal or social, will interfere with an individual’s ability to connect. Miller has declared that, through his plays, he tries “to make human relations felt between individuals and the larger structure of the world.” \(^{(17)}\) Following the tradition of his acclaimed American classics A View from the Bridge, Death of a Salesman, The Crucible, All My Sons, and Broken Glass reinforce Arthur Miller’s unrivalled reputation as the godfather of modern tragedy.

*Death of a Salesman* is a tragedy of our time and society. It is the tragedy of a man who is hollowed from within because he cannot adjust himself to the complacence, industry and competition that is in modern America. It is a tragedy in which the past and the present co-mingle and coexist in the expressionistic style. To his utter disappointment, Willy realizes that he and his sons have been complete failures. The past is a natural refuge from the cruel present. He starts remembering the good old days to avoid the pressure and harsh reality of unpaid bills and family friction. His infidelity and insincerity towards Linda throw him to the darkness of hopelessness and helplessness.

The cruelty of American business life comes across in the later scene. As Willy’s boss dismisses his request to be relieved of going out on the road any longer and transferred to the New York office, Willy bursts out:
You mustn’t tell me you’ve got people to see. I put thirty-four years into this firm, Howard, and now I can’t pay my insurance! You can’t eat the orange and throw the peel away—a man is not a piece of fruit. (18)

The American society is characterized by a new mentality, a different psychology. The mechanical act of selling and getting richer is placed as the highest value over the other human values and human beings. So modern society falls a prey to materialism. Willy Loman in Death of a Salesman is a representative of American everyman in a commercialized society. His tragedy is not that he can’t make money as a salesman but that he has accepted, even in his dreams, the ideology of a way of life that is killing him and the rest of his family. His tragedy is that he lies to himself until the end of his life. His fall and death reflected the total breakdown of the salesmanship. Nevertheless, his Americanness stretches out in the direction of universality.

Willy’s real condition lies in his insecurity in the universe, his profound sense of being unfulfilled, and in his inability to observe his own emotional limits. However, he tragically knows at least part of himself. He acknowledges that he feels temporary about himself. Strange thoughts bother him. Adding to Willy’s tragic stature are those moments when he assess his overall predicament when he meets his sons in the restaurant:

*I’m not interested in stories about the past or any crap of that kind because the woods are burning, boys, you understand? There’s a big blaze going on all around. I was fired today.* (19)

Such insights make Willy more than a misfit or an oversimplified everyman and they enhance his tragic stature because they reveal his ability to distinguish reality from delusion. His struggles to pay the mortgage and his insurance reinforce his tragic stature. Willy finds himself in a world that increasingly detaches itself from him, reminding him daily of his own insignificance. Willy commits suicide because he “cannot settle for half but must pursue his dream of himself to the end.” (20) He convinces himself that only his death can restore his prominence in his
family’s eyes and retrieve for him his lost sense of honour. But death does not defeat Willy. The Requiem proves that his memory will continue to live. He might not have won their respect, but he is definitely loved and that is all what Willy hoped to achieve. Miller says that what Willy wanted “was to excel, to win out over anonymity and meaninglessness, to love and be loved, and above all, perhaps, to count.”(21) His tragedy can be the story of every one of us, not only Americans. Another facet of tragedy is that the same unfortunate cycle is about to begin again, with Happy taking the place of his father. It seems that he has learned nothing from his father’s life and death, and seems to repeat his tortured existence with misconceptions about the world and unattainable goals.

_Death of a Salesman_ is a tragedy dramatizes the identity crisis. At the root of such crisis lie feelings of shame. Tragedy also dramatizes the way in which feelings of shame shape in individual’s sense of identity, and thus propel him or her into wrongdoing and guilt. _Death of a Salesman_ is the tragedy of Willy; it concerns his life; it reveals to us his mind, his conflicts and difficulties, his ideals and his predicament, his agony and suffering, his confusion and illusion, his expectations and disappointments. It also shows his relations with family, with his wife and sons, with his society, especially his employers. There are many reasons for his failure. One reason is his misplaced faith in the power of personal attractiveness. Second reason is his extraordinary concern for the well-being of his sons. He does not allow his children freedom to find out their own values. On the contrary, he wants to bring them up in his own world of illusions and false beliefs. He never lets them face reality. Thirdly, he is a victim of his society which encourages and develops in its members false values. It is the world of competition that has caused his doom.

In modern drama, playwrights break the convention of the tragic person, instead of kings in ancient drama; they invent an ordinary common person. Joe Keller in _All My Sons_ is simply an American, a common man. He is a representative type created by Arthur Miller. He is a very ordinary man, decent,
hard-working and charitable - a man no one could dislike. But he acts wrongly like the protagonist of the ancient drama that is to say he has a flaw or weakness. He is forced to accept responsibility. He commits suicides to restore the moral order of the universe, and allows his son, Chris to live free from guilt, shame, and persecution.

Joe Keller’s betrayal of trust and refusal to accept responsibility for others sets the chain of events that lead to his self-destruction. So that Joe chooses his fate and can have chosen differently. That is his flaw. Miller emphasizes the importance of social responsible behaviour through Joe. “All My Sons shows that the impulse to betray other and deny responsibility for the welfare of society, when left unguided, can run rampant and wreak havoc on the individual, his family and his society - even, perhaps, civilization as whole.” Joe Keller bears the heaviest weight for responsibility for the tragedy he has brought upon his family. Joe’s weakness is shown in his obvious inability to reject and resist the capitalistic ideology of the 20th century capitalistic American society; in addition to that his weakness in front of the business ethics of the time. It is true that in the play Miller portrays Joe and Chris as victims of the World War II.

Willy Loman, in Death of a Salesman, is selling himself and the American dream. He dreams the American dream and believes in the dream in a way he denies basic reality. Hence, the entire play is basically a struggle within his mind between his vision of himself and the painful reality of facts opposing his dream. Willy doesn’t really know what is happening to him. So Death of a Salesman is a desperate search to find out what is killing Willy, and Willy never finds it out. Willy never questions the social, economic or political order. Though his struggle and a battle with himself, he is neither interested in learning from other people nor wants the real world to intrude upon his fantasy world. Miller only understands the continuing force of the dream in mobilizing and inspiring people. Arthur Miller, through Willy Loman, is “emphasizing the power of the capitalist – consumerist – get – rich – and – well – liked dream, and the hold it has on the American
people.” That is shown by Willy’s son Happy who is living in illusion reflecting the dream he is looking for, saying to Biff:

But then, it’s what I always wanted. My own apartment, a car, and plenty of women. And still, goddammit, I’m lonely. 

*Death of a Salesman* shows good examples of the fables that define the American dream. American watchers think that the principles Willy Loman values – initiative, hard work, family, freedom, consumerism, economic salvation, competition, the frontier, self-sufficiency, public recognition, personal fulfillment, and so on – animate American cultural politics.

Are Willy’s dreams wrong or he was wrong in his way achieving them? He has dreams of business success. He wants to succeed in business by being recognized as a success and being admired, like legendary salesman Dave Singleman. The larger problem for Willy is that his dreams are incoherent. He wishes to be a successful salesman on the basis of being liked, while he doesn’t have the requisite sterling traits of character. Business success does not actually come from being a nice man respected by others. There are models in the play to prove that. For instance, Charlei has no time for Willy’s theories of business, but he provides for his family. Howard, also, Willy’s boss, is a heedless man with no time for personal relations who rejects Willy’s appeal to family friendship and fires him from his selling job. It is the reflections of materialism and capitalism on such characters that they even have no time for human relations and any kind of respect for Willy as a human being. Such turns in modern society lead to fade the American dream. Also, Ben- a ruthless, hard man – is the richest figure in the play. As he tells biff and Happy:

When I was seventeen I walked into the jungle, and when I was twenty-one I walked out. [he laughs] And by God I was rich.

Ben is the very opposite of the Willy’s idea of business success based on being nice. Harold Clurman says:
Death of a Salesman is a challenge to the American dream. There are two versions of the American dream. The historical American dream is the promise of a land of freedom with opportunity and equality for all. But since 1900, the American dream has become distorted to the dream of business success.\(^{(27)}\)

Willy Loman, the hero is a salesman who is driven by two examples of success that have a strong hold on his imagination. The first is that of a brother who ran away and became rich and the second is of a very successful salesman to whom buyers come without his having to take the slightest trouble. Loman is propelled not by ambition for himself but for his two sons, for whom he wants every good thing. But Biff asserts his independence by rejecting all the dreams the father has spun for him. Willy is a dreamer. In his younger days of salesmanship he dreamed: “someday I’ll have my own business, and I’ll never have to leave home anymore.”\(^{(28)}\) At that time his son Happy had expressed his hope that he would have as big a business as Uncle Charley’s but Willy had confidently said: “bigger than Uncle Charley! Because Charley is not liked. He’s liked, but not well liked.”\(^{(29)}\) Illusions are real to Willy. He never comes out of the world of dreams, illusions, and false beliefs. He boasts to his sons and wife. He tells them that people all around the places he visits know him.

However, Charlie and Bernard reflect another version of the dream. This version is not based on self-delusion and immoral drive for success, but hard work and charity. This version is not the dream that Miller attacked through the play. Miller attacked the version based on self-delusion and wrong values, in other words, the version based on capitalism. It is a time bomb under American capitalism. Miller himself says that Willy sells what a salesman always has to sell, himself. As a salesman he stages a performance for buyers, for his sons, for the father who deserted him, and the brother he admired. Gradually, he loses his audience, the buyers, then his sons, then his boss, and finally his whole life. Therefore, he sells hope and to do that he must first sell himself.
Biff is almost victimized in the clutches of the world of competition which squeezes his senses out of him, of the unexciting, and uninteresting ordinariness of this world which is divested of any romantic colours. This mechanized world, in which tough labour yields comparatively insignificant results torments his soul, for Biff instinctively loves to be amidst nature. In a moment of self-analysis and self-realization, Biff says to Happy:

*Hap, I’ve had twenty or thirty different kinds of job since I left home before the war, and it always turned out the same. I just realized it lately .......... This farm I work on, it’s spring there now, see? ..... There’s nothing more inspiring or beautiful than the sight of a mare and a new colt. ........ Texas is cool now, and it is spring. And whenever spring comes to where I am, I suddenly get the feeling, my God, I’m not getting anywhere. .... I get here, and I don’t know what to do with myself .... I’ve always made a point of not wasting my life, and everytime I come back here I know that all I’ve done is to waste my life.* (30)

Biff achieves self-realization better than Willy. It is Biff who gets to know the reality that his father’s dreams are hallow and destructive. He cries to his father:

*Will you let me go, for Christ’s sake? Will you take that phony dream and burn it before something happens?* (31)

But Happy who is a superficial thinker, reaffirms Willy’s dream to be number one. Only Biff seems to know the reality:

**BIFF:** *He had the wrong dreams. All, all, wrong.*

**HAPPY:** *almost ready to fight biff*: *Don’t say that!*

**BIFF:** *He never knew who he was.* (32)

The climax of the play comes not because Willy has been victimized by fate or capitalism or through the illusion of his manifold dreams. It comes because of the conflict between those dreams and reality, a reality that Biff and the audience perceive at the funeral. It is the logic of the market which shapes Willy’s dreams and that of the others. Man in this situation has lost his dignity and humanity and it is a big break of the Grand narratives. The play completely explores the failure of the American dream.
All My Sons is regarded as a criticism of American Dream. Joe Keller, an ordinary, common, and uneducated American, is the representative type. He wins a factory to secure his son’s future. However, Keller’s greed and quests for wealth leads to his responsibility for the death of 21 American pilots. Despite his being uneducated, he apparently achieves the American Dream, lives in a comfortable house, having money and lives a luxurious life. But his strong family unit is an illusion. Here the American Dream has become like an American nightmare. His wife is ill, Chris is discontent, and Larry has committed suicide as a result of his father’s irresponsible and shameful decision. The material comfort Keller has worked to provide his family is a consequence of a crime to achieve the American Dream. Chris says:

This is the land of the great big dogs, you don’t love a man here, you eat him! That’s the principle; the only one we live by - it just happened to kill a few people this time, that’s all. The world’s that way,... This is a zoo, a zoo. (33)

Here, Miller is emphasizing the hollowness of the American dreams. In All My Sons, Joe Keller chooses to see himself as a victim of others, and of circumstances imposed on businessmen like himself during the Second World War. He embraces the illusion that he is a victim of society, of the competitive business world, of the culture that makes it imperative for a man is American society to feel driven by the need to prosper, provide for the family, and succeed in attaining the mythic American Dream.

Lyotard calls it paralogy triumph over idealism and totalization. In All My Sons the fall of Enlightenment and rosy days of American Dream is clear. It is a depiction of American middle-class life in post-war era. Miller depicts the society looking to get rich at any cost and that is rooted in his dark vision of the war and the Great Depression. All My Sons, Arthur Miller has depicted the American Dreams by exposing some fundamental tragedies in the lives of his protagonists. According to modern concept of tragedy, the protagonists should be accountable for their deeds while facing any kind of moral dilemma, they make some wrong
decisions and choices for themselves which lead them on the verge of worst kind of tragedy. Though *All My Sons* is related with the past but this past helps to shape present and future of the individuals. It is inescapable to ignore or forget crimes.

Miller points out the flaw with a merely economic interpretation of the American Dream as business success alone. Keller sacrifices other parts of the American Dream for simple economic success. Miller suggests the flaws of a capitalist who has no grounding in cultural or social morals. Miller critiques a system that would encourage profit and greed at the expense of human life and happiness. The challenge is to recover the full American Dream of healthy communities with thriving families, whether or not capitalism is the economic system that leads to this happy life. Economic mobility alone can be detrimental--consider George's abandonment of his hometown for big city success. There is a rift in the Bayliss marriage over Dr. Bayliss's desire to do unprofitable research, because his wife wants him to make more money instead of do what he enjoys and what will help others. Arthur Miller wants to convey two contradictory viewpoints in his play, *All My Sons*, the American dream is bogus dream which is depicted only in very few and certain people’s life but most of them suffer from some panic situations in life in spite of having money.

Miller’s play *Broken Glass* deals with the complexities of post depression life for a couple whose sense of belonging to the great American dream is under attack from both within and without. As ever Miller writes about the great conflicts of life through the personal realities of individuals trying to survive and connect, the play is about loving and how the inability to express or indeed understand love can cripple the whole family. Phillip rejects his Jewish identity and continues his life in denial and allusion. He does not care about his family and hence loses the ability to save his marriage. All of that because he fears losing his good job in the bank in which he is the only Jewish employee. He loses his family and lives in betrayal and denial for the sake of getting money and achieving the
American dream in a very hard time of the Great Depression of the 30s in America.

The domestic family harmony has been fundamental to the definition of a culture, and when losing this harmony, culture starts to take a new trend and it is a cultural mutation. The failure of this ideal – the harmonious familial atmosphere – has preoccupied many serious dramatists. So for the first time in American history, a negative image of the family has arisen. Family members are caught between contrasting needs, such as yearning for the security of family and rejecting family structure. The American playwrights explore how the American myth of family has been strained by the contradictions inherent in their culture that posit freedom against security, community against selfhood. The protagonists may escape the family, triumph over its repression, be destroyed by it. Or each is left alone and anguished by the loss of family.

*Death of a Salesman* is a story about violence within the family. So the relation between Willy and his son is central. Over the years, no one of them has been able to let the other go because that means the dream which still has the possibility will vanish/be distorted till the moment Biff has come to know that there is something wrong and inadequate. Biff returns to announce that he has broken with the false values that he inherited. Willy desperately needs Biff to embrace him and his dream; Biff desperately needs to cut the link between himself and Willy. In such conflict the winner is a loser.

Willy’s most complex and ambivalent relationship is with Biff, who is associated most closely with Willy’s absolute ego ideal. It is of his older son, Biff, that Willy had always expected the most, and it is Biff’s failure to live up to his expectations that grieves him the most. Willy fails to protect and support his family that even affects his relationship with his family members. It is shown in the dialogue between Willy and his wife Linda about his commission:

WILLY: ….. *Otherwise I woulda broke records.*
LINDA: *Well, it makes seventy dollars and some pennies.*

*That’s very good.* (34)
Willy’s relationship with Linda is based on the amount of money Willy makes, and she determines Willy’s value down to the very last penny. Even Willy’s lack of providing for his family is apparent in the fact that Biff is a thief. Biff steals because he, like his father, has internalized capitalism’s ideologies based on acquiring more and more things. Another instance of failed familial relationship is at the restaurant. Happy’s lack of love for his father reaches its climax at the restaurant, when Happy denies that Willy is his father:

   LETTA: Don’t you want to tell your father –  
   HAPPY: No, that’s not my father. He’s just a guy.  

Happy, like Biff, has no respect for his father who has been demasculinized by a capitalistic social system that destroys his manhood and has alienated him from his family, friends, and even himself.

There are some family values in Death of a Salesman. Going through Willy’s values, Willy has a relation with another woman fifteen years ago. Biff discovers him and he realizes that his father’s values are false and that’s what causes Biff’s failure. Willy cries out for help and denounces the life-lie that has destroyed his family. He wants to regain the love and respect of his family and the self-esteem which he has lost. But he goes to achieve that in the wrong ways because he links the family values with the values of the business world in which he works. By encouraging his sons to steal and advising them to be well liked, he is instilling values in his sons that will have a definite impact on their future. Near the end of the play, Biff rebels against what he has become and against his father’s dreams. Freudian interpretation of the scene as Daniel Schneider calls it “the ultimate act of father-murder …..[a] very adroitly designed Oedipal murder,” in which Biff is the hero of the Oedipal theme. Simultaneously, Biff brings with him a deep self-hatred and an understanding of Willy’s desperation. Willy subconsciously know that he bears responsibility, as his sufferings bears witness.
Inspite of the long time familial relations, Howard, the boss, rejects it and behave in a very severe manner with Willy. A long discussion takes place in this important scene:

WILLY: Howard, all I need to set my table is fifty dollars a week.

HOWARD: no, but it’s a business, kid, and everybody’s gotta pull his own weight.

[......]

HOWARD: Kid, I can’t take blood from stone, i.... (37)

This represents Howard’s answers to Willy’s yelling. That is a good example of how capitalistic ideologies shown in Howard’s discourse affect the family. It shows Howard’s use of Willy as a commodity, till it is useless and then throws.

Family is the first unit of the society which has important roles in man’s life. In the Lomans family unity and coherence have been fading away. Inspite they are only four members, they seem far away from each other. Lack of understanding and generation gap are very obvious in the Lomans, which lead to their disconnection. Therefore, disintegration and isolation are outstanding concerns of postmodernism, which have been portrayed very clearly in Death of a Salesman. So this disconnection, disintegration, and isolation mark a clear break of the Grand narratives. Through the generation gap between Willy and his children and the children’s reject of their father’s dream, it signs a cultural mutation.

In All My Sons, Kate’s awareness of Joe’s guilt has helped establish a new appreciation of Miller’s ability to create strong female characters despite occasional attacks in feminist criticism. Feminist and other critics attack Miller’s portrayal of Kate as well as of women like Linda Loman, Elisabeth Proctor, Beatrice Carbone, and Maggie. One critic says, “Miller’s male point of view defines women as Other, either a paper doll devoid of depth and warmth or a source of confusion and the locus of evil.” He adds Miller is “creating women who endure and service and men who fail and fall”. (38) Here, Kate is not a tragic
protagonist who comes to larger awareness; she actually contributes to the tragic elements of the play suffering their consequence.

To Arthur Miller the father and son conflict symbolizes larger issue of power and renewal. The sons “struggle for mastery - for the freedom is the struggle not only to overthrow authority but to reconstitute it a new”(39). This issue is depicted in All My Sons as the father-son relationship is lined to the play’s central themes: the inseparability of past and present, and the connectedness of man to man. The past abuse of power by the father, Joe Keller, has not only killed innocent American fighter pilots, but brought about the death of his son Larry, the discovery of that abuse outrages the surviving son Chris, whose accusations help precipitate his father’s suicide.

The modernist suspects’ discontinuity and fragmentation are the ultimate reality. The conflict issue arises from Miller’s identity as a contemporary Jewish American. Miller claimed that the father-son relationship was very primitive thing in his plays according to his upbringing in a patriarchal Jewish culture which served to reinforce the mythic authority of male ancestors. As Irving Malian has observed, “The archetypal Jew embraces the rule of the father; the archetypal American rebels against the father. Two mythic patterns clash”(40) In this clash Jewish writers find tense resulting in the depiction of violence replaces tenderness and fragmentation defeats wholeness. So Miller’s All My Sons as well as Death of a Salesman describe the violent rebellion of sons against father. The Depression also played a profound role in Miller’s attitude toward the father-son relationship, and its signification of authority and continuity. Chris’s reluctance to lead his father’s business is a threat not just to Joe’s authority, but to the transgenerational continuity of traditional values. By means of the father-son relationship, Miller may be examining his own mixed feelings as a culturally assimilated Jew toward the spiritual legacy of his forefathers. So Chris’ rejecting to lead the family business is a clear sign of this cultural assimilation. So it is a kind of cultural
mutation through the familial relations. Although the motive that surfaces in Joe’s words when he fears his son will report him to the police:

I am his father and he’s my son... Nothin’s bigger than that. I’m his father and he’s my son, and if there’s something bigger than that I’ll put a bullet in my head." (41)

Chris has the idealism and the feeling of responsibility towards the society which are absent in his father and the dog eats dog capitalistic society around them.

Ironically, however, Kate’s loyalty to her husband only serves to widen the gulf between them because their knowledge of their deception makes them feel uncomfortable in each other’s presence. Chris is also responsible for his family’s dilemma. He is as guilty as his parents of attempting to hide from reality. He pushes his mother to accept his brother’s death, he does so for his own selfish reasons and not because the thinks it is in her best interest to be able to face reality. Chris suspects his father’s guilt but deliberately avoids confronting the truth. Chris fears that if he allows himself to see his father’s human imperfections, he will also have to recognize his own limitations and his experiences in the war make him dread that confrontation. But for Kate if Larry is alive “the war has no reality, and Joe’s crimes do not mean anything; their consequence are merely distant echoes in an unreal world. But if Larry is dead, then the war is real, and Joe is guilty of murder... guilty of murdering his own son.” (42)

The relationship between father and son in literature takes on a psychological quality just as explained in Freud’s “Oedipus complex”. It, more often than not, takes the form of the son’s protest or rebellion against his father or that of the conflict just like a generation gap. This issue is the crux of Miller’s drama. This is due to his belief that an individual and the society are closely related. The father-son conflict is also quite an effective dramatic technique in the sense that it creates a climax in the whole play and to attract the audience’s attention to the play. Showing the generation gap proves the changes happened to the ways of life in the society and thus to their culture.
Chris respects and idolizes his father, Joe; he cannot criticize or attack him. When his crime is revealed and when Chris severely accused Joe, he cried:

*What the hell are you? You’re not even an animal, no animal kills his own, what are you? What must I do to you? I ought to tear the tongue out of your mouth, what must I do?*  \(^{(43)}\)

Miller in *All My sons* shows the isolation of the Kellers. For Joe Keller, there is no outside world beyond his family and his job. His yard is surrounded by picket fence. Then one can see his bounded world. There is no comprehension for him of what is going on in the outside world. His whole world is his family. He takes his responsibility towards his family over the responsibility towards the whole society around him. So if he is guilty, it is not because of his evil intentions, but because of his ignorance. Miller wants to show that it is most important to develop an individual’s responsibilities to the family versus society at large. Though *All My Sons* is related with the past but this past helps to shape present and future of the individuals. It is inescapable to ignore or forget crimes.

The clash between Joe and Chris and Larry arises from the difference in their values. In this conflict between father and son there is witness of the fall of the Grand narrative also changing power from father to son that forces Joe to commit suicide. Bigsby indicates:

*On the face of it, Miller’s decision to structure the play around the relationship between a father and son implies a historical logic whereby the assumptions of capitalism are challenged, defeated and replaced by a new generation whose values, forged in wartime, are now to be socially and morally operative in peace. Larry died in order to draw a line across a certain historical development.*  \(^{(44)}\)

It can be seen as the end of Enlightenment and smashing of Grand narratives. Chris forces Joe to die. His argument with capitalism seems to dissolve into a generalized assault on a system in which self-interest is the only operative principle and in which, therefore, justice is mocked. Chris here is breaking the convection of Jewish culture regarding parenthood. It reflects the victory of morals
over capitalism, self – deception, illusion and reflects coming back to maintain the lost reality and social responsibility. It represents a cultural change after a cultural change. The idealism and the feeling of social responsibility represented by Chris come after the capitalistic ideology that the society comes to represented by Joe.

The Gellburgs, in *Broken Glass*, live at a time when the Depression offers a reminder of the fragility of a social world which can collapse overnight. Suddenly civility, moral assurance, myths of progress and individual integrity, seem deeply compromised. Harry Hyman’s idealism consists of his commitment to the community where he lives and to the sustaining of life rather than mere existence. But his wife is watchable for new signs of betrayal because of his adulterous affairs. Sylvia’s paralysis has been an emblem of her loss of control, related to a denial of certain responsibilities she had to herself as much as others. It is the acceptance of such responsibilities that offers a person real control in life.

Not surprisingly, the Gellburgs’ relationship has suffered as a result of Phillip’s ambivalent attitude to being a Jew. As news of the persecution of Jews in Europe fill the American papers, Sylvia’s fears about her husband come to the surface of her consciousness in the form of a recurring nightmare:

*Well, I begin to run away. And the whole crowd is chasing after me. They have heavy shoes that pound on the pavement. Then just as I’m escaping around a corner a man catches me and pushes me down ... He gets on top of me, and begins kissing me ... And then he starts to cut off my breasts. And he raises himself up, and for a second I see the side of his face. I think it’s Phillip. But how could Phillip be like ... he was almost like one of the others?* (45)

Sylvia suddenly sees Phillip as an oppressive Nazi who is trying to deprive her of her femininity. Thus this unhappy marriage breaks apart like a pane of glass just as the German – Jewish relationship is being torn asunder during the night of broken glass. Sylvia regains her self-confidence as a Jewish woman. Miraculously, she regains the strength of her legs when Phillip suffers a massive heart attack. He
does not survive the attack. For Sylvia, however, Phillip’s death frees her of the physical and existential paralysis that he had caused.

In *All My Sons*, it is the war that makes it possible for some to profit by the suffering and death of others and that creates the temptation of Joe Keller which leads to his son Larry’s suicide and his wife obsession, whereas Chris and George bring something positive out of the war, an ideal of brotherhood and more based ethic. But Chris’s idealism is poisoned at the source by shame and guilt that he cannot temper justice with mercy, either for himself or anyone else. At the end of the play, when he comes to know about his father’s crime, he is less to bear it than the others. Barry Gross describes him:

> Not only is Chris incapable of fulfilling his responsibility to the universe of people out there, he is even, incapable of assuming his responsibility for the few people in here [home].

Joe is frightened of telling Kate that they believe that Larry is dead because he knows she would associate Larry’s death with those of the twenty-one pilots killed by faulty cylinder heads he ordered shipped. Another evidence of his sense of guilt is shown in his fear of George who is coming to see his sister Anne after visiting his father in jail as a part of conspiracy to get him. He again reveals his sense of guilt when he tells Chris he wants to leave his wealth to Chris:

> I mean with joy, Chris, without Shame - with joy- Because I sometimes think you’re - ashamed of the money.

Keller’s denial of responsibility extends to the end of the play when Chris reads Larry’s letter to Anne and announcing his father’s suicide. Keller is trying to rationalize his crime and claims innocence saying:

> Who worked for nothin’ in that war? When they work for notin’, I’ll work for nothin’...

The paradox of denial in *All My sons* is that it does not only dehumanize but also it intensifies the personal anguish and alienation that bring about despair and tragic suicide. Chris wants to escape from this guilt and the anguish it produces. He tries to find relief by disguising his disgust with himself as contempt.
for his father. Another sort of denial brings about his father’s suicide. Chris tells his father:

*I know you’re no worse than most men but I thought you were better. I never saw you as a man. I saw you as my father.*\(^{(49)}\)

Chris perpetuates the lie that his father is anything more than just a man. Such self-deception fosters Keller’s illusions and paves the way for Chris’s disillusionment. In the play, Miller considers the fate of those who would return from the war and find the world and society whose values become different and half died. So the play is seen as a study of the death of the ideal. When Chris wants to disclose his love for Anne, he finds that his shame is tied up with a lot of things. He remembers his soldier – friends:

*They didn’t die; they killed themselves for each other. I mean that exactly; a little more selfish and they’d’ve been here today... but it seemed to me one new thing was being made. A kind of... responsibility. Man for man. You understand me?... There was no meaning in it here;... I felt... ashamed somehow. Because nobody was changed at all.*\(^{(50)}\)

Chris finds his father guilty of social responsibility and demands that he must be sent to jail to pay legally for his crime. Chris stays true to his principles, willing to sacrifice his own father for moral justice, to show just how hard it has become to be a man of principle in this society. Abbotson believes:

*The road of the idealist is never easy. He feels torn between keeping his father happy by staying in the family business and refusing to be caught up in the morally suspect world of commerce.*\(^{(51)}\)

This is the point where Chris becomes isolated from his family. His father is guilty of doing the crime, and his mother is guilty of hiding the information. He sees his parents now as evil people rather than role models and that is because of their self-deception. Such act of denial and self-deception are rooted in both, father and mother, who live in state of self-deception, avoiding one of the realities of life willingly in order to keep up the functional life-style of family. There are two facts
about the Keller family. One is Larry’s death, and the other is Keller’s responsibility for the shipment of defective parts. Mother denies the first and accepts the second and Keller accepts the first while denying the second. That led both characters to live in self-deception. Ignoring the truth prevents the family to function in acceptable ways. One is over-confident and the other is anxious so they are not comfortable together. Each has a debate about competing versions of the moral world and the real. This is another example of fall of Grand narratives.

Arthur Miller explores in his writing the theme of isolation. He interweaves this theme with his characters. In Death of salesman, Willy Lowman is a man who is alienated and lives in isolation. The theme of isolation is the focal point of the story, since it is what drove him to his suicide. He is the perfect example of a man alienated by a society that is controlled by money and power. The materialistic world creates a duality and makes trouble for him instead of helping him. Dualism is clearly vivid in the play such as duality of theme, duality of self, duality among the characters, and duality of time. The relationship between Willy and his son is central. There are forces that paradoxically pull them together and thrust them apart. Biff wants to save Willy, and at the same time to free himself. He is angry at Willy’s weakness, helplessness, and at Willy’s love for him. Biff and his father see the world differently and that created the generation gap. Father and son are a divided self. Bigsby interestingly gives the following details:

\[ \text{For Biff, his father stands between himself and his life. He is the past that has to be transcended, the falsehood that must be rejected, but also the debt that must be discharged.} \]

Willy desperately needs Biff to embrace him and his dream. He needs the affection and success of his sons to cover his failure. Biff, by contrast, desperately needs to cut the link between himself and Willy. There can be only one winner and whoever wins will also have lost. Willy’s appearance could be a hallucination, but only within dramatic from, which by definition excludes the inner world. Yet, in the play, present reality and the reality of the past achieve simultaneous representation. Interior monologue stands side by side with dialogue:
BEN: Is Mother living with you?
WILLY: No, she died a long time ago.
CHARLEY: Who?
BEN: That’s too bad. Fine specimen of a lady, Mother.
WILLY (to Charley): Heh?
BEN: I’d hoped to see the old girl.
CHARLEY: who died?
BEN: Heard anything from Father, have you?
WILLY (unnerved): What do you mean, who died?
CHARLEY: ..... What’re you talkin’ about?\(^{(53)}\)

Willy’s talking to Ben is a monologue and to Charley is a dialogue. This continual misunderstanding arises formally out of the side-by-side existence of the two worlds.

In *Death of a Salesman*, shame is linked to guilt and the search of identity is clearly shown in the scene in which Biff confronts Willy with the truth about who are they, and many other scenes. It is the confrontation with feelings of shame that enables Biff to find himself and separate his sense of identity from that of his father. Biff confronts his father:

*You know why I had no address for three months? I stole a suit in Kansas City and I was in jail. I stole myself out of every good job since high school.*\(^{(54)}\)

Nevertheless, it is the denial of such feelings that cripples Willy and the rest of the Loman family. When Biff steals the fountain pen of his old boss, Bill Oliver, Biff’s feelings of shame determine his self-perception as well as his conduct. He stops in the stairs and cries: “And I looked at the pen and said to myself, what the hell am I grabbing this pen for.”\(^{(55)}\) He does not want the pen, but he wants the life his father turns down. The pen symbolizes the career that he does not have and at this point he sees that he had to make a change in his life. Loman’s shame propels them into wrongdoing and guilt. In Act One, Willy feels incomplete and inadequate and feels uncertain about his identity. Willy longingly says to his brother Ben:

*Can’t you stay a few days? You’re just what I need, Ben, because I – I have a fine position here, but I – well, Dad left*
when I was such a baby and I never had a chance to talk to him and I still feel – kind of temporary about myself. (56)

His feeling of temporariness about himself is reflected in his inability to complete a thought after saying “I”. It is uncomfortable, self-conscious pauses.

In tears, Biff, asks his father: “Will you let me go, for Christ’s sake? Will you take that phony dream and burn it before something happens?” (57) He is not simply asking for his freedom from the shame produced by not living up to the dream of success and being “well liked”; he is asking for his father’s freedom from shame and guilt as well. He feels for his father and recognizes how that phony dream tortures him, at the same time that he retains his own sense of identity. Both are powerless in the face of shame. Feelings of shame that arise out of his sense of inadequacy as a man and as a father drive Willy to commit his greatest wrong. His adulterous affair with The Woman in Boston haunts both him and his son Biff. Biff continues to steal and move from job to job, not so much because he feels guilty but because he feels ashamed of himself for not living up to an image of success. Biff comes to the realization that why Oliver should recognize him meanwhile he couldn’t recognize himself. That’s when Biff sys to Happy:

I even believed myself that I’d been a salesman for him! And then he gave me one look and – I realized what a ridiculous lie my whole life has been! We’ve been talking in a dream for fifteen ears. I was a shipping clerk. (58)

Biff insists on the truth being truly heard by his father saying: “There is no spite in it any more. I’m just what I am, that’s all.” (59)

Once Willy realizes his life has been futile: he is old, has achieved little, is scorned by his boss and his sons, which makes Willy comes to face the absurdity of life. Willy Loman also, has lost his contact with the natural world. He has also lost touch with those around him. Willy is a representative figure of postmodern man who is separated from himself, from his fellow men, and from nature. Therefore, he has been changed into a commodity. This ideology brought about by
capitalism leading to psychological instability and disorder. It replaces the ideology that values human being for his humanity. It is breaking the Grand narratives and marks a cultural mutation.

Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* is a play about a family in which the patriarch, Willy Loman, struggles with the acceptance of reality. He does not only struggle to convince outsiders of his success and well-being, but he behaves this way in his family home as well. Biff and Willy have been deceiving themselves and each other for years. Biff and Willy both think that Biff had been a salesman for Bill Oliver. In reality, Biff had been a shipping clerk who had stolen a case of basketballs. Willy has deceived himself into thinking that he is a well-loved, well-respected salesman, when in fact he can’t sell enough to live. Willy’s deception concerning his infidelity causes all the problems his family faced. When Biff exposes the deception, he gives up his dreams because he considers them to be self-deception. Willy knows deep that he is the one who shattered Biff’s confidence, but instead of dealing with the problem, he tried to hide the problem with more deception. Willy keeps deceiving himself to the end till believing that killing himself is a solution.

Miller allows one to see that Willy realizes that his philosophy of life has failed him, through series of contradictions that Willy makes through the play. One of the most notable contradictions between Willy’s idealized version of life and reality is demonstrated during a conversation between Willy and his wife Linda:

> Oh I’ll knock ‘em dead next week. I’ll go to Hartford. I’m very well liked in Hartford. You know, the trouble is, Linda, people don’t seem to take to me. (60)

This conflict, between Willy’s idealized life and reality, or between what kind of man he could have been and what actually he is, has rendered him unstable both mentally and emotionally. The jump from reconstructed past to anxious present serves to underscore the extent to which hopes have been frustrated and ambitions blunted. The resulting gap breeds irony, regret, guilt, and disillusionment. Miller
says that Willy can’t bear reality and can’t do anything to change it so that he keeps changing his ideas of it. Although his dreams are based on the idea of being well liked, he has self-doubts leads to his awareness of being failure, the reality which he always denies. He tells Linda:

They seem to laugh at me ...... I don’t know the reason for it, but they just pass me by. I’m not noticed ...... I joke too much. ...... I’m fat. I’m very – foolish to look at, Linda...... I’m not dressing to advantage, may be. \(^{(61)}\)

In a very funny contradiction, he tells his boys:

.... And they know me, boys, they know me up and down New England. ..... ’cause one thing, boys: I have friends. \(^{(62)}\)

Except for Charley, the principal characters of Death of a Salesman share the same condition of being torn between the conflicting claims of ideality and actuality. Among the consequences of the inner conflicts and contradictions of Willy Loman and his sons are their uncertainty and confusion concerning their own identities, admitted by each at some points in the play. Biff reveals to his mother, “I just can’t take hold, Mom. I can’t take hold of some kind of life”\(^{(63)}\); Happy tells Biff, “I don’t know what the hell I’m working for. And still, goddamit, I’m lonely”\(^{(64)}\); and Willy confesses to Ben, “I still feel—kind of temporary about myself”. \(^{(65)}\) There are many contradictions shown in the play by the character of Willy. According to him, Biff is a lazy bum, at the next he is never lazy. A car and a refrigerator are reliable and junk. He is, in his own eyes, a successful salesman and a failure. It depends what story he is telling himself and his psychic need. Hope and disappointment coexist that brings him close to breakdown.

The conflicting inner selves that make up Willy’s many-sided persona represent his experience of the outer world refracted through the distorting medium of his psychological fantasies. The play is full of psychological implications which may be termed “psychological symbolism”. Transitions of scenes and arrangement of the events in the play is suitable to its psychological nature. The first act moves from despair to false hope. The second act moves from
a vestige of love to an orgy of hate, and death. A deep psychological conflict dominates this play. Willy’s disintegration presented in the play is psychological. Near the end of the last Act, Willy is found on his knees by a waiter. The scene is dramatization of Willy’s hallucination of a scene in the past, in which his son Biff caught him in a hotel room with a woman. So Willy loses his identity as a father and as a respected member in the society.

Miller also presents the loss of identity in Broken Glass. An event like the Holocaust involves everyone; there can be no turning away without cost. The denial, resignation, and ignorance are clearly shown in Broken Glass. Whatever its rationale, becomes destructive when it allows certain other actions to occur. “Of what use is Doctor Harry Hyman’s evident potency when he himself is incapable of true commitment or fidelity to either his culture or his wife? Of what value is Phillip Gellburg’s commercial success when he understands so little of who he is and what he does? Of what use is even Sylvia Gellburg’s compassion when she has lost touch with her own selfhood so much that she no longer retains even the capacity to stand?” (66) Thus the play explores the complex idea of humanity’s dual identity and points out the importance of balancing self-awareness and that is the individual identity; and a sense of security through connection to others and that is the social identity. Such balance allows people to live with dignity and harmony. Neither Hyman, Gellburg, nor Sylvia have attained a proper balance, and each represents a different aspect of failure. Their reactions to “Kristallnacht” are indicative of their failures and differences. Hyman refuses to acknowledge the true identity of others and views the Germans with nostalgic pleasure rather than seeing them as dangerous killers. Gellburg may accept the truth of events, but he refuses to allow them any relevance in his own life for he lacks both self-awareness and community spirit. Sylvia fully recognizes her communal identity and insists upon a connection, both personally and humanistically.

Hyman may have a capacity to enjoy life but he is dissatisfied with the quality of that life, a dissatisfaction which leads him to flirtation and adultery.
Both Philip and Sylvia avoid their personal needs so their problems grow and widen by their mutual silence. They create a gap between a husband and a wife. They blame each other: Gellburg sees his wife as emasculating and Sylvia sees her husband as tyrannical. As John Lahr points out:

*They’re both right, and they’re both wrong. What’s true is the psychological dynamic, in which blame becomes a way of not dealing with unacceptable feelings.*

Gellburg is so self-involved that he cannot feel comfortable in the anti-Semitic American community, nor is he happy in the Jewish community for which he feels such antipathy. What is worse, Gellburg has no place in the larger community of mankind. In a contrast to her husband, Sylvia has been in touch with the community but she has lost her sense of self. As she exclaims:

*I’m here for my mother’s sake, and Jerome’s sake, and everybody’s sake except mine.*

She has lived her life so long for others and she has lost all connection with her own selfhood, but she begins by blaming others for this. Whereas, seeing his Jewishness as a source of guilt and shame, Phillip acquires innocence by trying not to be a Jew and consequently victimizes others around him. To conceal his divided nature even from himself, he not only allows himself to be chosen by the dominant system that rejects him as Jew, but he warps his son’s future and betrays his genuine love for Sylvia. He complains that Sylvia

*.....does not like to hear about the other side”—German Jews
who won’t take an ordinary good job you know; it’s got to be pretty high up in the firm or they’re insulted. . . . [T]hey’re supposed to be refugees.*

Gellburg desperately desires a sense of control in his life. He acts like a dictator in order to seem in control, but in vain. His self-hatred is a kind of self-death, projected in his black dress. Tyrannizing Sylvia because of his self-detestation and self-defensiveness, he surfaces in her recurring nightmare in the guise of a Nazi who starts to cut off her breasts. All characters in *Broken Glass*
carry personal guilt with them buried somewhere in the unconscious. The play, John Lahr has written, is a tragic web of “the evasions and hostilities by which the soul contrives to hide its emptiness from itself.” (70) It carries a great deal of denial. Even Hyman shares in the guilt as Margaret taunts him about taking on Sylvia’s case. Hyman nearly makes love to Sylvia. When he fails to conceal his guilt and tries to evade Margaret’s accusations, pleading that he has been faithful for the past six or seven years, she tells him, “You don’t realize how transparent you are. You’re a pane of glass, Harry” (71) an obvious evocation of the title and another linking of private and public guilt.

Ironically, Sylvia describes herself as suffering a form of birth trauma, a reflection of the death and rebirth motif. She later tells Hyman,

\[\ldots \text{it’s almost like there’s something in me} \ldots \text{it’s like} \ldots [\text{She presses her chest}]—\text{something alive, like a child almost, except it’s a very dark thing} \ldots \text{and it frightens me!}. \] (72)

Another allusion to the theme of birth, Hyman tells Phillip in their last conversation

\[\text{If you’re alive you’re afraid; we’re born afraid—a newborn baby is not a picture of confidence.} \] (73)

These references suggest the frightening birth of an authentic self, frightening because such a birth can occur only through suffering. By fear and guilt, Sylvia and Phillip have betrayed their true selves, and consequently each other. Unlike Sylvia, faced with the past like the traditional tragic figure, he confesses, “I feel like there’s nothing inside me, I feel empty” (74) Paradoxically, it is a moment of truth he invites, yet it is only through painful self-confrontation that Phillip can somehow be redeemed from the past.

Meanwhile Sylvia Gellburg and her sister Harriet are having a discussion about her paralyzed legs, her son who is an artillery captain in the army, and Kristallnach, also known as the Night of Broken Glass November 9 – 10th 1938 which she has been reading about in the newspapers. All these pieces of information are the broken shards of glass in her life and are weighing heavily on
her legs. *Broken Glass* is an interesting but disappointing drama. It shows how fear can cripple a life.

As Miller has remarked, for him, as a Jew, the world can end. You do not have to listen particularly attentively to hear the sound of glass shattering on the sidewalk, in Sarajevo or Sudan. Besides, violence, betrayals, a sudden withdrawal of love and its replacement with indifference, are hardly the exclusive preserve of social life. They are the small change of personal experience. *Broken Glass* is thus a play which simultaneously explores the sometimes dangerous and sometimes redeeming compromises of personal life and the wider issues which make the world such a terrifying and sometimes such a hopeful place. There is a further connection here, namely that between ourselves and those who so denied their humanity in the 1930s and 1940s and do so again in the ethnic conflicts of the 1990s.

In such a time of the play, people who joined by love still discover what strangers they can become, as well as around the world it seems that the solid foundations of civilization continue to crack and crumble. In 1994, people in Sarajevo were blown apart by gunners on a hillside for no better reason than that they could be. The greatest betrayal lies in the conviction that we are powerless to intervene in our own fate. That moral and political paralysis, he insists, could destroy the world. Speaking in 1995, when war was still being waged in the former Yugoslavia, Miller insisted that, "*it is the paralysis which could destroy the world . . . The idea of being paralyzed in the face of forces we don't understand is the mark of our times, perhaps of all times. Yugoslavia is the ultimate paralysis.*"

According to Miller that you can’t stop neo-Nazis, but theatre can reach people and bring them together. Whenever you have theatre then you have society.

Miller, as shown earlier, explores the psychological condition of the American society. He also projects the effects of technology in the plays discussed in this study. Miller himself says about *Death of a Salesman*:

\[
\textit{It seems to catch the paradoxes of being alive in a technological civilization. In one way or another, different}
\]

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kinds of people, different classes of people apparently feel they’re in the play………. It seems to have more or less the same effect everywhere there is a dominating technology.\(^{(76)}\)

Howard represents the impersonality of a changing industrial technological world. Insensitive to Willy’s plight, Howard goes on demonstrating his new device, a tape recording machine on which he has taped the disembodied voices of his ideal American family. The expensive new technology is a representation of domestic American life. Howard is too self-involved to either understand or care about Willy’s situation, interrupting him with a list of all the old toys- a camera, a bandsaw, and all his hobbies- that he is going to discard as he discards Willy in favour of his new tape recorder. Willy seems afraid of the new technology as he leaps away with fright, shouting and calling Howard to switch the tape recorder off. Willy feels he needs to participate in Howard’s enthusiasm for technology and claims that he will get one himself. Insensitive to Willy’s financial situation, Howard encourages him without thinking of the cost:.

WILLY: *I think I’ll get one myself.*
HOWARD: *Sure, they’re only a hundred and a half. You can’t do without it.*\(^{(77)}\)

As Willy is reduced to begging for sixty-fife, then fifty, and finally forty dollars a week, what Willy actually cannot do without is some respect and a place in society after thirty-four years of struggling.

Miller presents Willy in all his social relations as employee, as erring husband, as failed father, as led successful brother, as modern consumer harassed by mortgage payments, insurance premiums and credit installments on machines that suffer from in-built obsolescence. He is thus shown being victimized both in his capacity as worker and his capacity as consumer. Willy’s crisis is a personal one, a crisis of values that connects with the crisis of values in the society at large. Society is undergoing rapid change as it committed itself to mass consumerism, and the resultant ideological conflict leads to anxiety and disorientation among individuals living through that social change. Miller explores some consumer
objects through vigorous language such as goddam Studebaker; the refrigerator consumes bells like a goddam maniac. In addition to that, Howard’s Dictaphone is a symbolic reminder of how far is Willy behind his own technological era who has no idea to turn off the machine. After all, Willy does not fit in with the industrialized world.

Yesterday’s new technology becomes today’s obsolete product. The rural becomes the urban; brilliant hopes fade into regrets. Yet Willy’s memories are those of a culture attempting to live mythically. Willy apparently yearns for tomorrow but is kept away by all evidence of the consumer society, high-rise apartments, wire recorders which lie outside his control. The problem is that the future holds the certainty of dissolution. His refrigerator and his car are disassembling themselves before his eyes and so is he.

So by the rise of consumer culture and material goods, ownership of what can be called luxury items, such as refrigerators, washing machines, pressure cookers and automobiles rose notably after World War II. *Death of a Salesman* premiered in 1949 on the brink of the 1950s, a decade of unprecedented consumerism and technical advances in America. Many innovations applied specifically to the home. Miller carefully criticizes the consumer society and its capitalist logic. In fact Willy himself as a salesman uses the language of advertisement to earn money. Advertising and consumerism are very much at the centre of the society which Willy inhabits and the products of this consumerism appear regularly in the play, usually in relation to the idea of debt. The 'sixteen dollars' on the new refrigerator whose fan belt has broken, the 'nine-sixty for the washing machine' and the 'three and a half' on the vacuum cleaner represent the products of a society which encourages the acquisition of material possessions, even when the individual cannot afford them. Without these visible symbols of consumerism, people like Willy are seen as failures who have not made it up the ladder of material success. The various household appliances that break down and have yet to be paid off by Willy seem to parallel the breakdown in the system that
he believed in such as the American Dream of consumerism. The pressures of the consumer society contributed to Willy's demise. Willy worked himself to death in a job he was unsuitable for to achieve these things but “They time them so when you finally paid for them, they're used up”. These payments seem to be the only thing Linda lets herself understand about Willy's problems. At the very end she shows how much she doesn't understand, “Why did you do it? . . . I can't understand it, Willy. I made the last payment on the house today . . . We're free and clear”.

She is as seduced by the consumerism as Willy.

But this consumer world has harsh rules; it exploits everybody and as Willy affirms that a man is not a piece of fruit to be eaten and then throw. In fact man must struggle for survival in a consumer society, which is like a consumer industry produces not things, but dreams disguised as things. Willy, by the harsh machinery of the contemporary consumer world, is beaten down. He cannot get up back. Linda exhorts:

But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid. He is not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must be finally paid to such a person.

Willy is the victim of the American Dream and materialistic condition. There are many like Willy, who put all their faith in personality, friendship, and personal loyalty—“Be liked and you will never want” but by coming a new way of thinking about salesmanship everything has changed. The Loman family is caught up in mindless consumerism and that these new products disrupt attempts at meaningful human interaction. Shockley states:

Miller shows the power of advertising and consumerism, and the contradictions of attitudes toward products in the Loman family by having Willy call his Chevrolet both “the greatest car ever built” and “that goddamn Chevrolet” in the space of only a few minutes, and in Willy’s remark that “Once in my life I would like to own something outright before it’s broken!” But while Willy utters these remarks, he still is completely caught up in the pursuit of the dream.
Miller in *Death of a Salesman* gives the bitterest satire on human condition in contemporary century. He writes about dehumanization result from Enlightenment. Miller criticizes the universal values of Enlightenment humanism. In the capitalism society, consumer culture shows the end of Grand narratives and western metaphysics, which bring tremendous disintegration among people.

In *All My Sons*, the impacts of capitalism and technology are obvious and of great effects. If Keller violates Grand narratives and fundamental principles of capitalism society, he also embodies other values in an ill and corrupted society such as valuing material achievement more than any other value. Capitalism creates false needs and satisfaction of these needs depends on denying moral roles and identity. Keller has taken a decision based on choosing between bad and worse by giving the order to repair the hair line cracks in the cylinder heads. One is his contract and may be the risk of crash of aircrafts and the other is his company which provides for his family in a materialistic society. It means, the question for him was not one of profit or loss; it was a conflict of responsibility—his responsibility to his family in a materialistic society versus his responsibility to the unknown men, engaged in the social action of war who might suffer for his dishonest. In such a society, Keller’s rationalization of his crime is always understandable and always unacceptable. Even Chris admits that they live in a dog eat dog world, so Joe Keller is as much a victim as a victimizer.

The Grand narratives of western civilization have been demolished. Loytard insists that the essentialist foundations of these narratives can no longer be accepted. One can see materialism makes Joe deny transcendent values in order not to be the victim of capitalism. Bigsby argues that Joes is corrupted by opportunity. According to Foucault’s idea of power, here the power situation has seriously subverted. Joe has lost his articulation and his power. His whole being is denied by his son, Chris. He feels isolated in his family. He feels isolated in himself. Naturally Chris can never get along with Joe because of his unrealistic ideas, Chris says:
I was dying every day and you are killing my boys and you did it for me? What the hell do you think I was thinking of, the goddam business? Is that as far as your mind can see, the business? What is that, the world – the business? What the hell do you mean, you did it for me? Don’t you have a country? Don’t you live in this world? What the hell are you? (83)

Moral and humanistic values are replaced by false needs and business language games. “I Think then I Am” changes to “I have Money then I am, I Buy then I Am”. Most of the characters think about money, the word that occurs throughout the play. Money is a dirty lovely thing for them. According to Harvey, modern capitalism, by assimilating more and more areas of life to the logic of the market place had caused a radical undermine of previously stable values, beliefs and economics forms. (84) In All My sons Miller makes it clear that society values money and profit more than human life.

The only outside world for Keller is his business so he is reflecting the values of this world. The business world has fake values in which human values have no place. Miller also shows that change happens to society because of industrialization and capitalism. He also shows that modern technologies become essential part of people’s life in a consumer society after the World War Second. Chris acknowledges:

I felt... ashamed... I felt wrong to be alive, to open the bankbook, to drive a new car, to see the new refrigerator. (85)

Chris mentions those inventions in a sign of astonishment and showing them as effective factors in modern life and cultural change.

The cause of the mysterious paralysis in Broken Glass seems to be the November 9th massacre in Germany. Sylvia reads about the events in the New York Times. She is mesmerized by a picture published in the paper that shows an elderly Jew who is being humiliated by the Nazis. The man reminds her of her grandfather and says:
Modern technological devices make the whole world a small village. That time was not as it is now but still the technology plays the important role shaping all facets of life in different ways. The destructive technological devices armies had that time make Jewish people to think that sky could fall and life has come to an end. Through media which connects people all over the world, Sylvia also reads the news in New York Times and sees pictures of Jews being humiliated by Nazis far away in Germany. Thus technological advancement plays a great deal in the tragedy of post-modern man. The play’s title invokes the idea of the multiple reflections one sees in a broken mirror, each related yet unique in its own perspective: a powerful symbol to illustrate the relationship between the individual and the society.

In *Broken Glass*, Sylvia Gellburg, in her wheelchair, is an exact image of the paralysis everyone showed in the face of Hitler especially the American Jewish community. The play shows the paralysis of the American national policy after the World War II and the drop of the atomic bomb and the holocaust. In Miller’s world, a refusal of responsibility is ultimately a refusal of humanity. Ignoring responsibilities, either personal or social, will interfere with an individual’s ability to connect and it is a fall of the Grand narratives. The play also shows the fragmented family relationships because of Philip’s ambivalent attitude to being a Jew and the failure of the American dream. It points out the consequences of public and private denial. Such dreadful actions show the personal and familial disorder which is a sign of cultural mutation.

One of Miller’s techniques throughout his plays is to familiarize certain characters by having them repeat the same key line over and over. Willy’s most common line is that businessmen must be well-liked, rather than merely liked, and his business strategy is based entirely on the idea of a cult of personality. He believes that it is not what a person is able to accomplish, but who he knows and
how he treats them that will get a man ahead in the world. This viewpoint is tragically undermined not only by Willy's failure, but also by that of his sons, who assumed that they could make their way in life using only their charms and good looks, rather than any more solid talents. In *Death of a Salesman*, psychological disorder is shown in the integration of the past events and conversations with present time conversation and that leads to a lack of coherence as it happens in the conversation between Willy and Charlie when they are playing cards. It is also shown by using the language of contradiction throughout the play. The dramatic discourse in the play tells clearly to what extent Willy’s situation is critical. The incomplete thoughts by Willy when saying “I” reflect the uncertainty and instability.

*Death of a Salesman* works because of its linguistic simplicity. The play is realistic, its language wrested from the American idiolect of clichés, its characters are recognizable to audiences, and its references are derived from the stuff of American popular culture of the day. Willy’s language reflects the tragic trajectory throughout the play. At the very start, he admits “*I’m tired to the death*”, and at the end of Act One, he says to Linda: “*I’m so tired*”. Miller extends the death motif when Willy opens Act Two by saying he slept “*like a dead one*”. Miller describes the music that has “*died away*”. As the play reaches its climax, Biff utters, “*Forget I’m alive*”, and Willy tells his son, “*Then hang yourself! For spite, hang yourself!*”. Charlie says “*My New England man comes back and he’s bleedin’, they murdered him up there*”; Willy calls business “*murderous*”. Near the end of Act Two, Willy says to Biff, “*You’re trying to put a knife in me – don’t think I don’t know what you’re doing!*”(87) death allusions permeate the script and Miller’s language suggests conflagration. A language which is for life becomes one for death. Miller’s tragic sense here is combining the social and the personal and demonstrating an ambivalence concerning inner and outer realities as Nietzsche asserts:
.....the cultural crisis portrayed by tragedy is always a fear of (cultural) death, which is the death of the self. Willy Loman tries in death to reaffirm his lost identity and his lost will. 

The language of the play is much better than many of his other plays. It contains some of the tragicomic irony that Ibsen used effectively in his social plays. That is evident in his exaggerated speech to his wife “I'm very well liked in Hartford” and to his sons “they know me up and down New England”. 

Miller here indicates how the society especially after the World War II goes out and ignores teachings of heavenly religions. The brotherly love recognized by Joe at the end of the play All My Sons is one of the major biblical themes regarding two brothers in the Old Testament. Cain and Abel give offerings to God and God prefers Abel’s. Cain becomes envious and kills his brother Abel despite God’s warning. This is the first murder the humans have ever committed. Nevertheless, all religions forbid killing a human being unless it kills, violates or/and breaks the norm of peace of humanity. The language of the play is poetic and it clearly indicates how Joe fails. It is somehow rhetorical language delivered in frustration and disappointment specially the 2nd and 3rd Acts. Joe is a failed figure, because Christianity allows a son to be killed by a father for sacrifice and redemption not for material profit. But in the Qur’an, the Holly book of Islam, the story of the prophet Ibraheem and his son Ismail (peace be upon them all), Ibraheem is told by Allah to slay his son as an offering. He tells his son and the son agrees. But at the time of the real action, Allah redeems the son by a sheep – mainly to show the holiness and the sacredness of human blood and life even if it is for sacrifice and redemption. But here Joe sacrifices his son for a materialistic and mundane profit; showing that he is far away from all celestial teachings and religions.

The desire of children of immigrants- like Miller - for integration with the mainstream culture encourages them to reject old world customs and rebel against authority. The pressure to assimilate makes it necessary for discontinuity, a break from the connection to ancestors, from the past. The play is not more than a
critique of the World War Second and how people compete to gain wealth as much as they can by producing destructive products. They are using the modern technologies. It shows how Joe, in such competition sustained by a capitalistic ideology, is behind the death of 21 American pilots, then his son’s suicide, then killing himself and thus killing the whole American society as he is an every American. So the play is seen as a study of death of the ideal, fall of Grand narratives, fall of Enlightenment, the failure of society to offer the meaning which the individual seeks.

There are two very important points to focus on: “The closeness of the relationship between Joe and Chris, and the difference between their attitudes to the family business” (90). The father thinks and sees business as his whole life and his son will be happy managing that business. But the son shows no interest in business more than one hour aday. He sees it as a shame that he is still alive having bank account while his friends kill themselves one for the other in the war. He comes back with the idealism of feeling responsibility towards the society around him. That’s completely opposite to the capitalistic ideology his father has. Miller pointed to the moment of revolt against the parent as the starting point of individual development. Chris is the mouthpiece of Miller, criticizing the changes brought by capitalism and the industrial revolution. It is shown in the following conversation:

JOE: Chris... Chris, I didn’t for you, it was a chance and I took it for you.

CHRIS: For me ! where do you live, where have you come from ? for me[....] What is that, the world - the business?.... you did it for me? ... you’re not even an animal, no animal kills his own, what are you? (91)

The rhetorical language and the feeling of disappointment and the idealism of Chris confront the loss of responsibility in Joe Keller for the sake of making money. Here, Chris is denying his father’s capitalist values that fail him, his family, and the society around him.
Joe Keller is an uneducated man. He is still wonder in many known things, for example, that new books are published every week or that a man can earn a living out of old dictionaries. He is the product of a vanished America. Joe has unrevealed history as Chris asks him:

*Where do you live, where have you come from?... Don’t you have a country? Don’t you live in the World? What the hell are you?* *(92)*

The answers lie within the Joe’s past. That is both result and proof of the generation gap that inevitably separates father and son. Joe is guilty of anti-social crime not out of intent but out of ignorance. His world is his home. He is an engaged man only to his family. As a change of heart and a change of mind the final result is unconvincing. Joe promises to put a bullet in his head if there is something bigger than the family, but when he listens to Chris reading Larry’s letter, he agrees that there is. Then he gets to know that he shamed his sons who don’t want to live in the same world with him. For Joe there is no conflict beyond the fact that time has passed and values have changed. So it is a great mark of cultural mutation.

Miller creates a Marxian view of American culture in the Depression era. He describes Willy as a childlike victim of the cultural values he adopts virtually without question. The play depicts the experience of disintegration and portrays the crisis of contemporary culture through the struggle of a modern common man because cultural identity is the rooted goal of civilized man. The illusion of Willy’s psychic crisis in contemporary culture is depicted through the tragic vision and Miller’s response to this crisis. Willy Loman is a father, a husband, a salesman, a member of a society, an item of human psyche, a tragic hero. He represents the whole mass of American civilization, a criticism of society. He is an indictment against the machine civilization of America which has deprived man of his real content and peace of mind. As Mille himself has said: “I didn’t write ‘Death of a Salesman’ to announce some new American man, or an old American man. Willy Loman is, I think, a person who embodies of himself some of the most
terrible conflicts running through the streets of America today. Thus Loman is everyman or any common man. Willy represents every person who has felt displaced from his rightful position in his society and longed to attain a sense of peace of belonging in a world that seems foreign and hostile to his wishes. Willy’s tragic situation gives a definition to human existence:

\[ ...the \ constant \ struggle \ within \ the \ individual \ between \ self \ and society, \ right \ and \ wrong, \ love \ and \ hate, \ joy \ and \ sorrow, consciousness \ and \ unconsciousness, \ work \ and \ play, \ success \ and \ failure, \ past \ and \ present, \ life \ and \ death. \]

Thus internal conflict characterizes human life. That is the attraction and glory of Willy Loman, his limitless hope in the face of hopelessness and refusal to accept defeat even when thoroughly defeated. The seeds which Willy desperately tries to plant in the dark in ground which receives no natural light symbolize his need to leave something positive behind, something that will represent new growth and investment for his sons. However, that the seeds will fail to germinate in these inhospitable conditions, in the same way as Willy and his children have failed to grow to full and healthy maturity within an inhospitable society.

Miller suggests the flaws of a capitalist who has no grounding in cultural or social morals. Chris’s reluctance to lead his father’s business is a threat not just to Joe’s authority, but to the transgenerational continuity of traditional values. Miller may be examining his own mixed feelings as a culturally assimilated Jew toward the spiritual legacy of his forefathers. It collapsed gradually generation by generation under the unique American conditions. Fathers lost their authority as the centre of the family as it is shown in Death of a Salesman and All My Sons. Geoffrey Gorer explains this:

\[ ...the \ making \ of \ an \ American \ demanded \ that \ the \ father \ should \ be \ rejected \ both \ as \ a \ model \ and \ as \ a \ source \ of authority. \ Father \ never \ knows \ best. \ And \ once \ the \ mutation \ was \ established, \ it \ was \ maintained; \ no \ matter \ how \ many generations \ separate \ an \ American \ from \ his \ immigrant ancestors, \ he \ rejects \ his \ father \ as \ authority \ and \ examplar, and \ expects \ his \ sons \ to \ reject him. \]

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Chris here is breaking the convection of Jewish culture regarding parenthood. It represents a cultural change after a cultural change. The idealism and the feeling of social responsibility represented by Chris come after the capitalistic ideology that the society comes to represented by Joe. Showing the generation gap proves the changes happened to the ways of life in the society and thus to their culture. For Joe Keller, there is no outside world beyond his family and his job. He takes his responsibility towards his family over the responsibility towards the whole society around him that led to his self-destruction.

*All My Sons* shows the breaking of Grand narratives in many ways, the changing power from father to son, the loss of social responsibility by Joe, and the inability to connect with the society around. All of that mark a great sign of a cultural mutation. The play explores the effects of capitalism on society and how modern man ignores all around him for the sake of his own profits. It is a new ideology that values money more than moral and human values. Hence the play shows the change happens to society because of industrialization and capitalism. Equally, Miller uses the father-son relationships in both plays, *Death of a Salesman* and *All My Sons*, to illustrate the gap that exists between the two generations, and the necessity for the sons to confront their fathers. Biff needs to reject his father’s self-destructive dreams to find his true self. And Chris needs to emancipate himself from his capitalist father in order to grow to his own sense of morality based on love and comradeship.

An event like the Holocaust involves everyone; there can be no turning away without cost. The denial, resignation, or ignorance is clearly shown in *Broken Glass*. Whatever is rationale becomes destructive. Broken Glass is an interesting but disappointing drama. Phillip’s responsibility in the sexual side of his marriage is a self-justifying tangle of evasion. Elsewhere, the salesman, Willy Loman, refuses to accept that he is a dime a dozen; Joe Keller must come to terms with the fact that all the young pilots who flew those P40s with the cracked cylinder heads are all (his) sons, even if they don't bear his name. It is doubtful if
Gellburg ever reaches this state, certainly too late to save his marriage. The problem of isolation arises in the studied plays because of the protagonists’ insensitivity and inability to accept the change.

Arthur Miller's writing is influenced by the immense historical events of his lifetime: two World Wars, the Great Depression, the Cold War, the growth of nuclear weapons, the McCarthy hearings, the fall of the Soviet Union, and the AIDS epidemic. Miller writes about ordinary people struggling in a world changed by events that seem to leave them without a spiritual base. Many lost hope and the effects of the Depression scarred at least two generations of Americans. They would never quite trust good times again. He highlights social issues that facing America at the time in order to encourage Americans who were depressed and affected by the Two World Wars and the Great Depression.

Miller also shows that change happens to society because of industrialization and capitalism and modern technologies become essential part of people’s life in a consumer society after the World War Second. Miller’s drama is seen as a study of the death of the ideal, fall of Grand narratives, fall of Enlightenment, the failure of society to offer the meaning which the individual seeks, and how capitalism in such a technological era affects the society leading to social and cultural mutation.
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