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In Arthur Miller's plays family life embodies an important dilemma, one which reflects the strains of changing family structure. By looking at how the family life is portrayed in Miller's Plays, perhaps we can discover the fabric of the mind, a pattern of values and ideology which has longer implications. The portrayal of family life in Arthur Miller's plays clearly reveals the point at which social history and literature intersect.

Though American drama bloomed quite late. America as a new nation with its origins as far back as the 16th century, had to represent Europe, particularly England. Not to speak of Puritanism dominated America for over 200 years. American life began to achieve a kind of democratic nature only after its independence from England in 1776. The second important event is Frontier Expansion. Thirdly Americans by nature were not much deep in their intellectual make-up and they borrowed European knowledge. American drama began to develop after the Civil War in the 1860s. Already playwrights like Thomas Godfrey, Robert Montgomery Bird, George Henry Boker, Dion Boucicciolt, David Belasco and many more built up the American drama and theatre. Norman Holmes thinks, "Despite the development of a native drama, the important impact of modern American drama came from abroad: from Ibsen and Strindberg, Chekhov and Shaw."

After the World War I expressionism, especially through Kaiser and Toller, made itself felt. Sartre, Brecht and Beckett's influence was there too. The little theatres as well as Broadways developed a kind of vitalization.
Eugene O'Neill was the first great American playwright. Meanwhile, other playwrights like Elmer Rice, Maxwell Anderson, Laurence Stallings, Sidney Howard, Philip Barry, Clifford Odets and Thornton Wilder developed the American drama. After the World War II four dramatists left their mark: William Inge, Tennessee Williams, Author Miller and Edward Albee. Of these Arthur Miller was outstanding for his contribution to American drama.

Arthur Miller is a great American writer. He was born in Harlem in 1915. He was such a poor student in high school that only his special plea that he wanted to be a writer allowed him to enter the University of Michigan; evidently his letter exhibited his ability. This turn toward the academic occurred only after several years' work in different jobs, one of which was in a warehouse on Tenth Avenue. The *Brothers Karamazov* was the first great book he could remember reading, a work which determined his desire to write.

Under the tutelage of Kenneth Rowe, Miller wrote several prize one-acters while at Michigan. He was in the school of journalism at the time and previously had seen only one play and read a few of Shakespeare's works. He wrote several plays a year while at Michigan, some of which have been produced. He turned to New York as a hack writer, for radio and TV mainly, and as an aspiring novelist. His one novel, *Focus*, received some acclaim in the early forties, but his first full-length, professionally-produced play overshadowed it. *All My Sons* proved to be timely since its theme was corruption in important places: here the small-parts manufacturer father indirectly causes the plane crash death of his own son.

Miller was a great playwright. He deals with such themes as family, society and anti-capitalism. Some of his great plays are *Death of a Salesman,*
The Crucible and A View from the Bridge. He has written several plays still. Some of them are one-acters, and cinema scripts.

All this is dealt in great detail in the chapter II "Arthur Miller and the Tradition of Social/Family Drama."

Miller's first play All My Sons is known for its family theme as much as for its social/national theme.

Death of a Salesman, probably Miller's greatest achievement, describes the disillusionment, ending in suicide, of Willy Loman, a tragic figure who has lost the knack of "selling" himself. A devastating critique of commercialism and false values, Death of a Salesman ends with a plea by Willy's wife that "attention must be paid" to those who fail to achieve conventional worldly success. Miller's drama The Crucible (1953) deals with the Salem witchcraft trials, had a temporary political resonance as an implicit damnation of Sen Joseph McCarthy's Senate hearings investigating communist subversion. In 1956 Miller was indicted by HUAC for refusing to identify left-wing associates. Miller's other plays include A View from the Bridge (1955), The Creation of the World and Other Business (1972), The Archbishop's Ceiling (1976), The American Clock (1980), Some Kind of Love Story (1983), Playing far Time (1986), The Ride Down Mount Morgan (1990), Broken Glass (1994), and Resurrection Blues (2001). Several of Miller's plays, included All My Sons, Death of a Salesman, A View from the Bridge, and The Crucible, have been made into motion pictures. Many more have been filmed for television.

All this is discussed as part of chapter II "Arthur Miller and the Tradition of Social /Family Drama."
What starts out as a relaxed image of American life as neighbours congregate in Joe Keller's backyard on a summer's evening soon begins to develop fears and tensions. Ann Deever is coming from New York to visit Joe's 32-year-old son Chris. She was once engaged to Chris's brother Larry, a pilot who was lost in action in the Second World War, and Kate Keller, mother of Chris and Larry, refuses to believe that Larry is dead. Moreover, Ann is the daughter of Joe Keller's former business partner, now serving a jail sentence for equipping fighter planes with faulty engines, killing 21 pilots. Although it was Keller who instructed him to do so on the telephone, Keller denied his part in the crime, but Deever's son George has discovered the truth and comes to take Ann away from the Kellers. Despite everything, Ann still wants to marry Chris, and shows him a letter written by Larry before he went missing saying that he is going to kill himself because of his father's crime. Chris, horrified that his suspicions about his father are now confirmed, confronts Keller with the letter and demands that he give himself up to the authorities. Keller, realizing that the missing pilots 'were all my sons', goes indoors to shoot himself. The play deals with the conflicts between family and social values.

*Death of a Salesman*, probably Miller's greatest achievement describes the disillusionment, ending in suicide, of Willy Loman, a tragic figure who has lost the knack of 'selling' himself. A devastating critique of commercialism and false values, the play ends with a plea by Willy's wife that "attention must be paid."

*Death of a Salesman* is known for its family life. First of all we see Miller sketch the family of Willy Loman, his wife Linda, two sons—Biff and Happy, and their blithe neighbors Charley and his son Bernard. Ben as Willy's brother is brought into the play with cinematic technique.
Death of a Salesman is a family play as well as a critique of American life and its capitalistic values. Willy Loman as popularly known as 'the little man' lives like an ordinary salesman. He himself was brought up with his brother Ben by their father, a flutist. He looks after his family with utmost concern. He has a fine house, a sweet wife, and two sons. He has reared vegetables in his garden. He has tried to provide good education to his sons. He is unhappy about Biff's education and worries about him. He wants the sons to get some loan from Bill Oliver and raise a ranch in the West. So that all can have their 'family business' as appreciated in America. Willy loves to make his family a happy family and he dies for its economy and survival at the end.

The play is known for successfully blending the themes of personal (familial) and social tragedy within the same dramatic framework.

In the next play The Crucible, Salem's minister Revd Samuel Parris prays for his 10-year-old daughter Betty, who with other local girls had been dancing at night in the forest. Parris is concerned that, led by his black slave Tituba, the girls had 'trafficked with spirits'. At first, his beautiful niece Abigail Williams denies witchcraft. When Thomas Putnam and his wife declare that they have been bewitched, Abigail admits that Tituba and the Putnams' daughter Ruth conjured spirits, but she persuades the other girls to remain silent about Abigail's curse on John Proctor's wife. As Proctor's servant, she had had an affair with him, until his wife threw her out of the house, but she still longs for him. Rebecca Nurse, a respected grandmother, manages to soothe little Betty. A neighbouring minister Revd John Hale, an expert in witchcraft, interrogates Tituba and the girls. Under severe interrogation, Tituba confesses to witchcraft and names local women in league with the Devil. Abigail hysterically joins in, denouncing more
women as witches. Betty sits up and joins in the denunciations. The marshal is summoned. A week later, the town court is trying witches. At their home, Proctor's wife Elizabeth urges him to report that Abigail had initially denied any witchcraft, since now even the gentle Rebecca Nurse is accused of being a witch. To Proctor's horror, Elizabeth is also arrested when a doll pierced by a needle is found in her home. He realizes that Abigail is plotting to have her condemned so that she can have Proctor to herself. Proctor gets his servant girl to admit that the doll was hers and goes before Deputy Governor Danforth to get Elizabeth released. When Abigail pretends to be bewitched, Proctor admits to his affair with her and declares 'it is a whore's vengeance'. However, Elizabeth when questioned denies the affair to protect Proctor's reputation. Proctor denounces the court and is arrested. He goes bravely to his death.

The play is known for the test of conscience of an individual. It has substantial family conflicts, particularly the difference between the Mr and Mrs Proctor. This is arguably the best known historical drama of the 20th century and secured Miller's reputation as one of America's leading playwrights.

Miller's *A View from the Bridge* is an interesting play. Eddie Carbone, a 40-year-old longshoreman, lives with his wife Beatrice and his pretty orphaned niece Catherine in an apartment overlooked by Brooklyn Bridge. As Catherine grows up and takes a job, Eddie becomes unnaturally edgy about her. Two young cousins of Beatrice come from Italy- as illegal immigrants ('submarines') to live in the apartment. Marco is serious-minded, intent on finding a job so that he can send regular remittances to his family in Sicily; Rodolpho is good-looking and light-headed. Catherine is attracted to Rodolpho, and Eddie, jealously implying that Rodolpho is homosexual,
warns Catherine that he wants to marry her only to obtain an American passport. When Eddie discovers Rodolpho emerging from Catherine's bedroom, he orders him out of the house. Catherine says she will leave with him. So Eddie, breaching the Italian code of honour, calls the Immigration Bureau and has the 'submarines' arrested. Marco spits at Eddie and denounces him. When Marco is allowed out on bail to attend the wedding of Rodolpho to Catherine, Eddie, now shunned by his neighbours, threatens him with a knife. They fight and Eddie is killed. The lawyer Alfieri, who has commented on the action throughout, cannot help admiring Eddie's passion.

These four major plays by Miller deal with family life as much as social life in America. The same is elaborated in the chapter "Family Life in Arthur Miller's Major Plays."

Miller, as a versatile and major playwright of modern America, has written other full length plays. He has also written many one act plays, radio plays and screen plays. Some of them deal with family life. Miller's first one act play No Villain is rather based on his father's business. Abe Simon, a coat manufacturer, is faced with ruin when a strike of shipping clerks prevents him delivering his goods. The bank is about to call in his credit note. One son, Ben, who has grudgingly gone into business, supports him, despite his own left-wing convictions. Another son, Arnold, back from college and imbued with Communist ideology does not. There are hints of a possible solution if Ben will marry the daughter of a rich manufacturer but this is a sub-plot which is dealt with in a perfunctory way. The conflict, in essence, is that between private interest and the general well-being, but there are, as the title suggests, no villains; the characters are all victims of a system which alone is evil. This sets man against man and places material
rather than human values at the centre of affairs. Miller twice revised the play naming them *They Too Arise* and *The Grass Still Grows*.

Miller's second play *Honors at Dawn* is another strike play, rooted to some degree in personal experience drawing, as it does, on the time he had spent in an automobile parts warehouse and his experience of university life. Once again there are two brothers, representing different responses to life and adopting radically different stands with respect to an economically and socially divided country. Miller's third play, *The Great Disobedience* based on his visit to Jackson prison advocates prison reform. It reminds us Charles Dickensian's social philosophy. Just as *Honors at Dawn* had detected the hand of big business in university affairs so *The Great Disobedience* sees the prison system as intimately involved in capitalism's efforts to protect its profits and maintain its control. Miller's next play *The Golden Years* concerns the ravaging of Mexico by Cortes. Montezuma, king of the Aztecs, is pictured as insecure even in his absolute power, indeed, in part, because of his absolute power in that he is unsure what purpose it could be said to serve. Cortes, meanwhile, battles his way to the heart of the empire in search of gold, though in the name of Jesus. The play explores the reason for Montezuma's capitulation before this adventurer who lacks even the sanction of the Spanish throne. It dramatizes the dilemma of a man who suspects he may have encountered his own fate and hence, mesmerized, paralyzed by the sheer certainty of the invader, surrenders himself and his people. The play offers a comment on Miller's own times as well as a study of power and its seductiveness.

Next Miller wrote *The Half-Bridge* (1941-43), the only one of his plays to deal directly with the war. It concerns Mark Donegal, mate of a merchant ship, who is encouraged by a Nazi agent to use his ship for piracy
and insurance fraud. In 1940 Miller wrote the novel *The Man Who Had All The Luck*. It tells the story of a man, David, for whom everything turns out well and who believes that he has no hand in his own destiny. He is a happy chap. In 1953 Miller wrote the play *A Memory of Two Mondays*. Actor Martin Ritt liked the play and they thought that they needed a 'curtain raiser.' This inspired Miller to write *A View from the Bridge*, an one-actor. In August of 1962, Miller wrote the play *After the Fall*. At the same time, he received the news of the death of his past wife Marilyn Monroe due to overdose of sleeping pills. He had her death and his life with her in mind. He felt a profound sense of loss at her death and a deepened anger at the rest of the world for pushing her to that end. As he anticipated, the play was a failure. Much of the audience did not grasp the intertwined themes of guilt and denial and many remained confused by the play's unusual mixture of characters, abrupt appearance and disappearances, and transformations of time and place. Miller's play *Incident at Vichy* has a family story.

The years 1976 and 1977 were productive ones for the writer, but not altogether successful ones. By 1976, Miller completed *The American Clock*, a 'mural' of American society during the Depression. A rather unconventional series of scenes and moods, the play failed to reach significant audiences in America.

The next play, *The Archbishop's Ceiling*, completed in 1977, was a drama derived from the playwright's travels through Prague as president of PEN. It, like *The American Clock*, was a highly intellectual piece that attempted to tell a story in unconventional, splintered units of dialogue and action, and its fate in the United States was the same.

Apart from his full length plays and those well-known one actors, Miller has left us many lesser known one actors such as *That They May Win*
(1943), Fame (1970), The Reason Why (1970), The Poosidin's Resignation (1977), Elegy for a Lady and Some Kind of Love Story (both, 1982), I Don't Remember Anything (1986) and Clara (Danger: Memory!) (1986). Miller has written several radio plays. He adapted his own plays for radio too. Some of his radio plays are The Pussycat and the Expert Plumber who was a Man (1941), William Ireland's Confession (1941), The Four Freedoms (1942), Grandpa and the Statue and That They May Win (both 1945), and The Story of Gus (1947). Miller has written several screen plays after he married Marilyn Monroe. The Misfits where his wife Monroe starred is a famous one. His other screen plays include The Story of G. I. Joe (1944), The Hook (1951), The Reason Why (1969), Playing for Time (1979), Theatre in Modern China (1980), and Up from Paradise (1981). If Theatre in Modern China (1980) is a document of his theatrical visit to China, Up from Paradise (1981) is his concert.

Family is a major theme in Miller's plays. His plays often depict how families are destroyed by false values. Throughout his life and work, Miller has remained socially engaged and has written with conscience, clarity and compassion. His works are infused with his sense of responsibility to humanity and to his audience. Hence his plays are a fusion of naturalistic and expressionistic techniques. His scholarship is very extensive which holds mirror to his craftsmanship.