CHAPTER - 4

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Arthur Miller started writing plays in 1935 when he was in the University of Michigan. He wrote *No Villain* and *Honors at Dawn* in 1936 both plays won him the University's Hopewood Award. *The Great Disobedience* was his third play. His fourth and more important play *The Man Who Had All the Luck* (1944) saw bad production at Broadway. *They Too Arise*, a version of *No Villain*, was produced by both a local group and the Chicago division of the Federal Theatre. Even *Honors at Dawn* and *The Great Disobedience* were more obviously apprentice work. *The Golden Years*, a play which takes place during the conquest of Mexico by Cortes, is a work of considerable subtlety and power which was written in response to the growing power of Hitler's Nazism.

Since Arthur Miller wrote most of these plays at the University of Michigan, they are called Michigan plays. The plays express the vaguely held beliefs of a writer trying to make sense of the economic crisis which had come close to ruining his own family and which had challenged the most fundamental myths and basic political and social conventions of a nation. One must know that the 1930s Depression affected Miller's early plays and their production. The rhetoric lacks the control of his later work, a control he was often to achieve through writing first in verse and then in prose. These plays are known for verbalism. He frequently discharges in words what he would later be content to express through character and action. There is also melodrama. These early plays depict Miller's vision of American family and society.
Miller's first play is rather based on his father's family and its business. The initial typescript of the play is shorter and simpler than the various versions that followed. 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 theory, will 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 is a critique of American family which is torn of ideology. This sets man against man and places material rather than human values at the centre of affairs. Thus, Abe insists, much as Isidore Miller had done, that "If you don't get them they'll get you. You gotta be on one side or the other in this business. In any business... It's dog eat dog." His son, Arnold, sees things differently: "You've got to get out and on top and look down and see, see what one thing is worth against another. The world is different now than when you were young. It's not there to be made now. Now we've got to change the world!" (Arthur Miller, No Villain, p. 13).

Again, no definite model of the new world in process of being born but a call for a new generation to escape from the sterile and destructive materialism which had corrupted the 1920s, a spirit embodied in the titles which Miller chose to give to two subsequent revisions of the play: They Too Arise and The Grass Still Grows.
The play which was performed by the Hillel Players on 12 and 13 March 1937 was a considerably revised and improved version of *No Villain*. The dilemma in which the Simon family finds itself is now sharpened by the inclusion of a meeting of the Manufacturers' Association which debates the hiring of strike-breakers. The figure of Grandfather Stein is elaborated, becoming not merely a comic focus but also a crucial test of Abe's faltering humanity. More significantly, *They Too Arise*, as it was now called, is no longer a play about a simple conflict between capital and labor. It is also centrally concerned with betrayal: the betrayal by the Jewish manufacturers of their religious precepts and moral principles, of workers by their employers, and vice versa, of Abe by his son Arnold, and, in some degree, too, of his sons by Abe, as he seems willing to sacrifice Arnold's principles and Ben's freedom in order to sustain his dreams and substantiate his myths. *No Villain* is a protest play and more importantly a drama which concerns itself with contrasting views of the meaning and nature of experience. It debates on individual's relationship with society. It addresses issues which were to become central to Miller throughout his drama career. Moreover, at the very beginning of that career he chooses to focus on the family, finding there a microcosm of those tensions which equally characterize a society in transition. The father is presented as an embodiment of the tradition and of an authority which must be challenged: the sons are an expression of a necessary revolt which nonetheless is tainted with guilt. If these complexities are not as yet addressed with any great subtlety Miller is already discovering the dramatic energy to be generated by familial relationships in which loyalty clashes with belief, moral value with social theory, and personal commitment with public form. So, here, Abe builds a business in order to pass it on to his sons. Their acceptance will be the mark of his achievement, an endorsement of his values, an expression of their
love and a perpetuation of his name and hence of his existence. The following lines express this desire for perpetuation: "I wanna leave ya with a ..., with a name... with a clean name and a ... and a healthy business." But their independent existence depends on a resistance which love and a sense of duty inhibit them from offering. So Ben has given up college after two years in order to help his father, while Arnold, who has not, collaborates in the process which destroys his father's business. Years, later, in *The Price*, Miller was to play elaborate games with a similar situation but the tension is equally there in *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*. Will the sons be captured by their father's myth, and hence justify his life at the expense of their personal identities and even moral beings, or will they, like Arnold, turn their backs on that life in the name of abstract values (justice, ideology, faith) or personal fulfillment, thereby vindicating themselves and declaring their innocence, at the price of an implicit indictment of their father remains a mystery.

Miller rewrote the play *No Villain* and he renamed it as *They Too Rise* (1938). All the elements which were to go to make Miller's first Broadway successes so effective were already visible in *They Too Arise*. He had simply not yet developed his sense of character to the point at which Ben and Arnold, for example, carry total conviction. Arnold remains altogether too vague. It is clear that he believes, but precisely what he believes is less certain. Is it a workers' state he wants or simply some control over monopoly capitalism? What precisely does he feel about his father? Ben comes into clearer focus but it is difficult entirely to believe in the gesture whereby he agrees to marry the daughter of a rival manufacturer in order to bailout his father and their faltering company, though this scene was to be effectively reworked, in an ironic and amusing way, in *The American Clock*,...
a play which contains more than one echo of *They Too Arise*. This, then, is not a play without its faults, especially when compared to Miller's later work; but already, in the course of a single year, he had succeeded in turning his first prize-winning version into something more complex, more theatrically convincing and more morally demanding. Abe Simon who finds his civic precepts in collision with his moral convictions is a worthy predecessor to Willy Loman. Convinced that "most of the people oughta know what's right and what's wrong" he finds himself, apparently for the first time in his life, forced to question a basic tenet of his belief. Christopher Bigsby observes, "He resolves it at the level of language by invoking other principles ("the way an honest man does business," "it ain't no way for Jewish men to act") only to discover that this leaves him a social victim without becoming an ally of those who he is, incidentally, trying to protect - his own sons. His bafflement is close to that felt by Joe Keller in *All My Sons* and Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman*. In those plays, however, the sense of guilt could not be acknowledged or expiated, unless by death. Here history, in the shape of economic forces, relieves Abe of the dilemma since financial ruin removes him from the arena of corruption. The family survives because, under pressure, Abe is allowed the grace of self-knowledge; the absolution of bankruptcy leaves him innocent of the crimes in which the other manufacturers had invited him to be complicit."

In short, he can walk away. Later Miller chose to turn the screw that much further, no longer permitting his characters to side-step their fate. The Simon family is ruined financially but redeemed spiritually. And in this version of the play it is Abe, not Ben, who is able to sense a new possibility, to have a new vision.
One can think that there is to be sure, an echo of Odets, but now the rhetoric comes from a character whose own myths have collapsed. There is a desperation which in some way leavens and perhaps even slightly ironizes the ringing declaration of faith in the future. So, the man who had struck out at his own father-in-law, rather as Billy Budd had at Claggart, simply because he could not find a language commensurate with his own sense of affront and injustice, now insists of his own sons that, "They ain't gonna get rich by killing! They ain't gonna go through what I went through in my life for nothing. . . I wasted my life for what? They're young yet Esther, they got a life to live! . . . I'm gonna see that they don't waste it like I did trying to get rich! . . . When I lifted that hand against the old man it was like some kind of a . . . of a thing ya can't see was pushing me . . . it was like a . . . Esther that was something. . . dirty. . . something rotten was pushing me . . . know it! Esther and it's gotta be wiped out! I dasn't say no more! I don't know how, I don't know where but I gotta do it! I will not see my sons laughing at it the way I did till it drags them so far they gotta hit an old man to stand up! . . . We oughta be able to learn a lot. . . we can change a lot. . . A lotta changing we can do . . ."  

This is a fine speech by a graduate of University of Michigan.

A third version of the play *The Gross Still Grows* (1938) seems to be that prepared for the Theatre Guild's Bureau of New Plays, whose $1,250 award it received. Certainly the copy in the Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center is so marked. The principal difference between this and the earlier versions lies in the fact that Arnold is now permitted several speeches in which he makes clear the nature of his ideological stand. This shows the problem of the vagueness of his motives but does so at the price of certain credibility as his father obligingly listens
to an analysis fundamentally at odds with his own beliefs. However, there is a polemical force to his remarks which is reminiscent of the famous passage in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night* in which the world economy is shown to be operating in the interests of the rich, as these are embodied in the person of Nicole Diver. Arnold observes:

A man in Chicago gets up in the morning and goes to the Pit - the grain exchange. A man in Chicago a thousand miles away, a place you've never been in and never will be, lifts his finger and suddenly one morning in New York Esther Simon finds that she can't buy her daughter a dress. Why? Because a man in Chicago bought wheat and bought something else on the exchange and raised the price of food in Esther Simon's grocery store. See? A finger lifts in Chicago, and in New York Esther Simon can't buy her daughter a dress. Esther never saw the finger, the finger never saw Esther.4

In this version *The Gross Still Grows*, Arnold is very explicit as to why he is unwilling to help his father by delivering coats and thus undermining the strike of shipping clerks. The enemy is not the impoverished workers but those who command economic and commercial power. Here the war is between the haves and havenots. For example: "If we take the right of ownership away from that little finger in Chicago, then Esther Simon will be able to buy her daughter a new dress. Because the grain is there. The farmers grew that. But by being able to command credit and money, a finger can lift and hold back that grain from the people. And the people will have to pay and pay and pay until that finger stops. But when it drops it is not the same finger. It's fatter. But Esther Simon still could not buy that dress."5
The capitalists control the lives of the poor. The best way is for the people to take that power away. It is said, “I'm a Communist because I want the people to take the power that comes from ownership away from the little class of capitalists who have it now. I didn't work because the shipping clerks are organizing to help take that power away some day. They are the people... some day the working class will own what they are built all these years.”

Steinbeck in his novel *The Grapes of Wrath* speaks of ownership destroying communal values in the name of self-interest. What is needed, he suggests, is a revolt by the people, working together against the alienation of the laborer from his work and a system of monopoly capitalism. However, the passage of time has turned such social analysis into sentimental rhetoric. That this seemed less true at the time is evidenced by Miller's plays. The theatre seemed at the heart of this change as the Federal Theatre sought out new audiences and confronted them with a radical view of their own society in such plays as *One Third of a Nation* and *Triple A Ploughed Under*.

The Group Theatre, meanwhile discovered and promoted the career of a man - Clifford Odets - whose challenge to the prevailing system could be regarded as radical, at least in the context of a society whose own political system has rarely found a place for a truly ideological left. Thus, when Arnold addresses his parents and accuses them of closing their eyes to the larger political issues of the day he is making a case not only for his own involvement but also for a theatre which must be similarly engaged.

Miller is aware of the personal cost of presenting what Ibsen had called the demand of the ideal. Arnold's confident analysis is tainted by the detachment which is its precondition and he is shown arguing with his
brother as his grandfather suffers a fatal heart attack, for his is indeed a social philosophy which has a hard time making space for the individual. In the third version of the play Abe Simon is no longer given the concluding speeches. Rather like Willy Loman he remains committed to the idea of personal success.

Christopher Bigsby observes, "In the course of three years, then, the play moved from being a committed social work to a light comedy, with all reference to the shipping clerks' strike eliminated. The final version is witty, and articulate but lacking in dramatic conviction. Character is sacrificed to plot as the social drama becomes the pretext rather than the essence of the play. Abe is simply too detached from his own fate for his dilemma to carry any force while, drained of any real social convictions, Arnold and Ben become insubstantial figures lacking in self-knowledge and hence self-doubt. For her part, Esther emerges as something of a cliched Jewish mother, and, indeed, the play's humor relies in part on the stereotype." The version which today seems the most convincing is the one first performed fifty years ago. It expressed a genuine social anger which was no less plausible for being on occasion naively expressed by characters reaching for a language.

Miller's second play though listed as his first by some was Honors at Dawn, written in 1936. In fact this was a product of 1937 and with it he received his second Avery Hopwood Award, the judges being Susan Glaspell, herself an outstanding playwright and regional director for the Federal Theatre; Allardyce Nicoll, the drama critic; and Percival Wilde, a prolific playwright whose work was especially popular with amateurs. Not as accomplished as They Too Arise, it nonetheless comes out of the same concern with the battle for human rights. Miller, the committed playwright,
was doing battle for the working class. *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. Harry celebrates the American dream. The son of a Polish immigrant, he embraces the myths and prejudices of a society whose chief virtue seems to lie in the economic rewards which it offers to those with the energy and ruthlessness to claim them. His brother, Max, seems uninterested in the siren call of success. He is a practical man who takes pleasure in his ability to maintain and improve machinery, a talent which he is invited to extend to the perfection of society by his workmates at the Castle Parts factory. They are involved in a fight for higher pay and union recognition and persuade Max to assist them by distributing leaflets. When he is seen doing this he is offered a bribe to inform on his fellow workers but refuses, joining his brother at university as a means of avoiding the dilemma. When precisely the same offer is made to Harry by the university authorities, themselves under pressure from the factory owner whose donations to the university give him a hold over the institution, he readily agrees in return for a loan to finance his extravagant lifestyle. His job is to report back on radical students and on a professor whose views have brought him into conflict with the same factory owner.

The professor is fired and the degrees of his student supporters withheld. At first Max is unwilling to believe in a connection between the university authorities and the industrialist at whose hands he had already suffered; he certainly resists the notion that his own brother might be involved. But confronted with the evidence of corruption he returns to those
he regards as his natural allies. He has no illusions about the lives which they live: "A worker's house is gray. Rain is the only paint they get. They're gray inside and out. Outside there's the rain, inside the tears. . . . when you live in barracks like that, you don't live. . . . you're like coal. . . . just there to be shuttled in. Gray houses and gray people with bumpy faces like the bulging paper on their walls." But if their lives are two-dimensional they have the integrity of confronting necessity. They are free of deceit. They see one another not as rivals for the few rewards society has to offer but as comrades. Accordingly, Max goes back to the factory and joins them in their fight, where, in the process of making an impromptu speech, he is shot.

Christopher Bigsby says, "The play lacks the subtlety of Miller's later work. Thus Harry is gauche and strident as well as socially reactionary. He despises those who work with their hands, including his own family, and obligingly enunciates his single-minded pursuit of success. He manipulates the system and in turn allows himself to be manipulated in an ironic version of the social contract. By contrast, Max is a plodding idealist, a natural engineer who combines honest work with enlightened values which he derives from experience rather than from the social theories which seem to motivate his fellow students. To be sure, in Death of a Salesman Happy and Biff are similarly juxtaposed, each representing one aspect of Willy Loman's sensibility; but neither is self-parodying, as at times Harry and Max are, nor are his later characters forced to become the mere embodiments of social values." In a way Honors at Dawn is a melodrama in which character, language, and plot are pressed to extreme. The play ends, with a pistol shot. But then All My Sons, Death of a Salesman, and A View from the Bridge all end in violent death and The Man Who Had All the Luck was to have done,
Miller finally changing the ending some forty-two years later. This is in accordance with the ideals of the 1930s literature.

Susan Glaspell herself has written about social injustice. Both Miller's *Honors Dawn* and Susan Glaspell's *Inheritors* have epic pretensions, relating family conflict to public issues. But where Susan Glaspell's admittedly much more assured work was produced by the Provincetown Players and secured national attention, Miller's failed to secure even a laboratory production at his own university, something that was accorded to his next play.

Miller's third play, *The Great Disobedience* could not win an Avery Hopwood Award. Based on his visit to Jackson prison, it set out, as did Tennessee Williams in his early unpublished play *Not About Nightingales*, to identify the need for prison reform. It reminds us Charles Dickensian 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. The character Victor Matthews, who has become an inconvenience to the rubber company for which he works as a compensation doctor, is sent to prison, ostensibly for performing an illegal abortion but in fact because of his failure to protect the interests of his employer. This is presented as doubly evil in so far as the abortion itself is seen as a life saving gesture (the young girl in question was contemplating suicide) offered to someone already suffering as a consequence of an inequitable society. The penal system not only corruptly cooperates with big business, it becomes a symbol of the power of capital and industry to rob individuals of their freedom. Between Victor and his fate stand two people; Caroline, the woman who loves him, and Dr. Karl Mannheim, an old college friend who
is now the prison psychiatrist. Only two years earlier they had all been at university together, Caroline then being Karl's girl. Now Victor's career is in ruins and Karl's depends on the goodwill of a sadistic Deputy Warden. The question is whether Karl will side with a corrupt system or with his friend. He is certainly liberal in his approach to the men in his care and tries to reduce the worst effects of the world in which they find themselves. He attempts to change the system in subtle ways.

In a way The Great Disobedience is, if anything, more melodramatic than Honors at Dawn. Victor Matthews becomes psychotic, convinced that Caroline carries the child who will one day grow up to denounce the system which has destroyed its father and to claim the freedom which is denied to him. Karl also slips to the very edge of madness, overcome by guilt at his failure to intervene in the lives of others, and by shame at his inability to shape his own life into something he can claim with any pride. The battle is essentially that between a soulless capitalism and the needs and aspirations of the individual. Beyond that it is a debate about the nature of American values.

Miller wrote his next play The Golden Years when he stayed in Brooklyn. 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. This is a tragedy of the tribal king and the fortune for the invader. And this invader is a tyrant. The play offers a comment on Miller's own times as well as a study of power and its seductiveness. Miller speaks of *The Golden Years* as looking toward a non-existent poetic theatre inspired by the Elizabethan models. In fact, there were other models closer to home in Maxwell Anderson's plays, while T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* received its first production at the hands of the Federal Theatre which Miller admired. Auden and Isherwood, likewise, believed in the possibility of a drama whose language transcended the urgencies of a world confronted by the prosaic realities of Depression at home and Fascism in Europe. In fact the 1930s writing abounded in the elevated language of an idealized socialism (as evidenced in the theatre by Clifford Odets, and in the novel by John Steinbeck), or simply the soft metaphysics of William Saroyan. Christopher Bigsby comments: "*The Golden Years* is not a verse drama. Its poetic language is functional, distinguishing a world structured on myth and symbol from one primarily dedicated to fact and engorged with the arrogance of power. To be sure Cortes pays lip service to the idea of transcendence, while Montezuma is as drenched in blood as the man who challenges him, but they are divided. For Cortes, religion is no more than cover for rapacity while Montezuma's power is in the service of a search for meaning. That they are fatally illusioned, becoming each other's fate, is an irony which breaks both men, though only one comes to understand the extent of his betrayals."9

Miller finds an optimistic undercurrent in *The Golden Years* because there is no real despair or defeat of the spirit. Yet, in truth, the optimism is hard to find. The play ends with Montezuma dying and Cortes triumphant. The key, perhaps, lies in Montezuma's dying speech to Cortes: "When my
people struck me, I was oppression in their eyes. Look on me, Conquistador; in my unmourned face see your face, and in my destiny, the destiny of all oppression that dares to dig its heel in the living heart of Mexico." The debate is essentially over the logic of history. Montezuma's failure to resist will be redeemed in time by a more fundamental instinct to rebel against oppression. His death is exemplary and sacrificial."\textsuperscript{10}

For Miller, Cortes represented the "intensely organized energies" of Fascism, while Montezuma, for all his authoritarianism, stood for the wayward self-fixation which he saw as characterizing the democracies. Looking back, he sees \textit{The Golden Years} as "struggling against passive acceptance of fate or even of defeat in life," as urging "action to control one's future."\textsuperscript{11}

Indeed, the play speaks of Hitler's fascism and his oppression of the Jews. Miller thinks Hitler, still cannot finish the Jews once for all. In the words of Ernest Hemingway, a man can be destroyed but not defeated. As Miller was later to reject the theatre of the absurd, which seemed, to him, to express the futility of struggle, so, in 1939, he declined to accept the inevitability of appeasement and betrayal.

\textit{The Golden Years} may appear to lack the theatricality of Peter Shaffer's \textit{Royal Hunt of the Sun}, but in fact its theatrical potential is considerable, from the startling opening scene in which the moon is eclipsed; through to the operatic ending, with Montezuma facing his people in the moment of his own betrayal and disillusionment.

Next Miller wrote \textit{The Half-Bridge} (1941-43), the only one of his plays to deal directly with the war. It has never been published or produced and is, perhaps, the weakest of his apprentice plays. 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. He does this as he is disillusioned by an America which seems to him to have betrayed its frontier past for a flaccid mediocrity. The half-bridge of the title is a reference to the incomplete life of anybody who fails to understand the necessity to open communication with others. His sense of a powerful absurdity governing human affairs is conquered, finally, by a new vision of human solidarity. The echoes of 1930s communalism are still apparent but, in common with the much revised. But if *The Half-Bridge* is of little more than academic interest Miller was now on the verge of launching his public career, for the following year his first Broadway play appeared. It was, however, a play with a history.

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. He is the beneficiary of chance, of coincidence, of, in short, luck. What seems missing from life is any sense of justice as an operative principle. The result is guilt and fear, guilt at what he feels is his unfair advantage, and fear of the ultimate fall which he is convinced must eventually come if the justice for which he looks, and in which, perversely, he wishes to believe, should finally operate. On the other hand, the young man Amos's hopes come to nothing. Others in this small community also have to live with disappointment. Overwhelmed by an absurdity which sends one man on to success and another spiraling down to failure, David first drifts into psychosis and then takes his own life. Finally death, is the only reality he can embrace. Miller rewrote it as a play, publishing it in 1944 in a volume of new American writing, whose editor was prescient enough to include the
work of other unknowns: Norman Mailer, Jane Bowles, and Ralph Ellison. In shrinking it from a 360 page novel he opted for a different story and a different style. It became a fable in which the accidents of fate are deliberately underscored. By the time it was produced, however, still further revisions had been made, the most crucial occurring to Miller as he sat on a Long Island beach. David and Amos became brothers.

If *The Man Who Had All the Luck* turned out to be an ironic title for a novel which failed to find a publisher, it was an equally ironic title for the play which opened at New York's Forrest Theatre in 1944, Miller's first ever professional production. It folded in four days. The failure, Miller later judged, was a consequence of a production which never found the style necessary to unlock its peculiar power. It may seem odd that a young man yet to make his way in the professional theatre should write a play in which success seems a burden, but the fact is that, judged by the standards of the day, and of his family, Miller was a success. He was a graduate. Two of his plays had won awards at university and one a Theatre Guild Award. For several years he had been writing radio plays. But, as a playwright, who by definition worked with words, his success was inescapably a reproach to a father who was, effectively, illiterate. As Miller remarked of *The Man Who Had All the Luck*, in an interview, with Charles Bigsby in 1995, it "hardly seemed a Depression play," but "the obsessive terror of failure and guilt for success."12

In August of 1962, as he neared the end of the play (now titled *After the Fall*), he received the news of Marilyn's death caused by an overdose of sleeping pills. Though they had not spoken for a while, Miller felt a profound sense of loss at Marilyn's death and a deepened anger at the rest of the world for pushing her to that end. More disappointment came
with the news that the Lincoln Center project was off due to unavoidable differences between the artistic collaborators and the bankers who comprised the board. Left stranded with a newly completed play, Miller and Whitehead worked to produce After the Fall in a new repertory theater on West Fourth Street in New York City. The makeshift downtown theater was not ideal; the playwright and the producer were called upon to screw in the seats on the afternoon of opening night and the less-than-perfect facility only served to underscore the author’s sense of impending doom. After the Fall was not well received. There were many people, too, who, noticed an uncanny resemblance of Marilyn in the female lead character, Maggie, although Miller denied basing his character on his late wife. It is known for guilt and denial. This montage approach did not go over well with the critics either, but the play nonetheless held together well enough for Whitehead to ask for another drama from his friend Miller. As an act of solidarity, the playwright wrote Incident at Vichy, loosely based on the life of an old friend, a psychoanalyst who was arrested with false papers in Vichy, France, and was saved by a man he never met. The play was banned both in Russia and France for it depicted scenes of anti-Semitism.

The Price had a respectable season in New York and went on to play in theaters throughout Europe with some notable international actors. The play The Price, produced in 1968, showed that people cannot resolve conflicts within themselves or with others unless they face the truth. During the struggle to free Peter Reilly, Miller completed a play entitled The Creation of the World and Other Business which, like The Price, considered the inevitable failing of human nature and how we, as a society, react to them. The years 1976 and 1977 were productive ones for the writer, but not altogether successful ones. By 1976, Miller had completed
The American Clock a mural of American society during the Depression. 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.

Some plays, such as The Crucible, take a while to find their rightful place. Frequently, time must pass before they are accepted; other times they must be produced in other countries before they must be produced in other countries before they are appreciated. In the case of The American Clock and The Archbishop's Ceiling, recognition took ten years and would come from England rather than America. By 1986, both plays were packing London theaters and doing exceptionally well.

Ironically Miller found that television, rather than the stage, was able to handle one of his hard-minded plays. In 1979 he wrote the television script Playing for Time, a tragic story of a woman who survived the death camps of the Holocaust by playing in an all-prisoner musical group. The Nazis used this makeshift orchestra to calm those marching to the gas chambers. In the early eighties, Miller created two one-act plays that also tried to explore the conventions of theater in a new and interesting way. An Elegy for a Lady was an attempt to write a play with multiple points of view, one for each of the two characters, plus a third—that of the play itself. One of the pieces, entitled Clara, depicts a man named Kroll, who is shocked when he discovers the body of his murdered daughter. The companion piece to Clara, entitled I Can't Remember Anything, was comprised of two elderly characters who also struggle with memory and the unpredictable way recollections can surface and the present can instantly become a forgotten past.
Thus we notice that Arthur Miller's later plays deal with themes such as family, loss, separation, racism, ethnic issues, national issues and the like. Most of his plays deal with family matters.
References:


