Chapter 3

Reality Without: Social Realism

“Society is in man, man in society”

Arthur Miller

3.1 Introduction

Ibsen, Shaw, Chekhov, Brecht and Miller share in common the philosophy that the fate of man is social and that the stage should be considered as a medium more important for ideas than for mere entertainment, and should serve a serious purpose intellectually. Miller’s plays are ineluctably social. He cannot conceive of the individual outside of a social context of a society that does not reflect the values of those who constitute it.

Art for Miller has to be responsible to social realities. While he was creating groundbreaking works of art, he never seemed to forget the social realities of life. Miller’s life and work were shaped by the catastrophes and upheavals of the twentieth century: the Depression, the Holocaust, the Second World War, anti-Communist hysteria and blacklisting in the McCarthy era and social protests and uprisings of the 1960s. Engrossed in issues and involved in political movements, he took national and world events seriously, foregrounding these concerns in his plays.

From the apprenticeship plays to Broken Glass, Miller’s plays reveal his concern for social issues. Though the apprenticeship plays are not analyzed in this study it should be noted here that his apprenticeship work reveals his concern for
socio-political issues and hence an overview of the apprenticeship work is presented here.

In the development of Miller as a dramatist the early plays, written before 1944, play a significant role. However, sorting the chronology of his early plays is not easy mainly because the dates on some of the type scripts prove to be unreliable.

He wrote his first play No Villain in 1936 and followed it with a series of plays in which he tested his skills and explored his response to private and public issues. In the play, the conflict is between private interest and 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 attention. The Great Disobedience written in 1939-40 deals with political issues. It took place during the conquest of Mexico by Cortes. It is a work of considerable subtlety and power which was written in response to the growing power of Hitler. They Too Arise is written out of the concern with the battle for human rights in a world apparently dedicated to serving the interests of big business and the careers of captains of industry. Miller, the committed playwright, is seen here battling for the working class.1

Miller’s first Broadway play was The Man Who Had all the Luck (1944). The play depicted a character who anticipates his doom simply because he has come to accept the value which the community has put on his success. It was a fable about human freedom and individual responsibility.

Honours at Dawn is rooted to some degrees in personal experience, drawing as it does on the time he had spent in an automobile parts warehouse and his experience of University life. His one-act play A Memory of Two Mondays is based upon his warehouse experiences.
Miller's Michigan 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.

In the words of Christopher Bigsby it was "a starkly Manichaean decade generated by its own necessities and urgencies and he [Miller] simply responded to those pressures in common with others who were joining in a national debate about the meaning and direction of American society." Thus, Miller's concern for social issues is evident in his apprenticeship work. All his plays are written in conventional realism. In this chapter Miller's selected major plays are classified as given below to trace the social realism:

Plays of 1940s and 1950s.

All My Sons - 1947
Death of a Salesman - 1949
The Crucible - 1953
A View from the Bridge - 1955

Plays of 1960s and 1970s.

After the Fall - 1964
Incident at Vichy - 1964
The Price - 1968

Plays of 1980s and 1990s.

The American Clock - 1980
The Last Yankee - 1993
Broken Glass - 1994
3.2 Plays of 1940s and 1950s.

The following plays are selected for analysis:

All My Sons - 1947

Death of a Salesman - 1949

The Crucible - 1953

A View from the Bridge - 1955

These plays deserve a special place in the playwright’s canon because the plays constitute Miller’s first major theatrical achievement. All My Sons, Death of a Salesman and A View from the Bridge depict the impact of the American Dream. The American Dream is the concept widely held in the United States of America that through hard work, courage and determination one can achieve prosperity. Death of a Salesman replicates a model of community and of citizenship to which most theatre goers regardless of gender, race, nationality or ideology respond. The theatre goers assume that principles like consumerism, initiative, hard work, family, economic salvation, competition, self-sufficiency, public recognition and personal fulfillment animate American cultural poetics. The founding fathers after all predicated the United States’ constitution on the belief that every citizen possesses an inalienable right to the unfettered pursuit of the American Dream. Miller presents A View from the Bridge as a satirical comment on the social and political climate of the time. Death of a Salesman presents a rich matrix of enabling fables that define the myth of the American Dream.

The Crucible shows the impact of McCarthyism. Miller was perplexed and frightened because of the rise of McCarthyism. He has made the claim “that if I had
not written *The Crucible* that period would be unregistered in our literature on any popular level." This reveals the sense of urgency that he felt for writing the play.

**All My Sons**

*All My Sons* is a play with a social thesis. It focuses on what the individual owes to society, not what society owes to him. It is also about idealism, Americanism, opportunism and family loyalties. *All My Sons* uses war profiteering as its background. Miller notes that "the story was told to him by 'a pious lady from the Middle West' about a neighbourhood family that had been destroyed when the daughter turned the father in to the authorities on discovering that he had been selling faulty machinery to the Army during World War II." Like most of Miller's works, this play is concerned with the dark underbelly of the American Dream. This time it is prosperous post-war America.

The main protagonist of the play Joe Keller, a manufacturer is forced to accept individual social responsibility and consequently to accept his personal guilt for having sold, on one occasion during the Second World War, fatally defective aeroplane parts to government. The defective cylinder heads supplied by him led to the deaths of twenty-one pilots. At his trial, he had denied any responsibility, letting his timid partner, Steve Deever take the blame and the punishment. Having been exonerated, Joe Keller has successfully re-established his business and, though his neighbours still believe him to be guilty they have apparently accepted him back into their social life. But relief at his acquittal is diluted by grief at the loss of his son Larry, reported missing in action and presumed dead. When the play opens about three and a half years later, Larry's fiancée, Ann (daughter of Joe Keller’s business
partner who is now in jail) arrives to marry the dead boy’s brother Chris Keller. Ann’s arrival brings about a crisis in the Keller family, and especially for Kate Keller who has always refused to accept the fact of the death of her son Larry and who had so far been seeing Ann’s failure to marry anybody else as a proof of Ann’s similar faith in his being still alive. But her acceptance of Larry’s death also forces her to acknowledge some connection between that death and what she knows to be her husband’s guilt. The situation becomes more complicated when Ann’s brother George arrives to confront Joe Keller with that guilt. Although George fails to obtain a confession from Joe Keller, the planned marriage between Ann and Chris brings about that confession because Chris’s mother plays her final card in order to prevent the marriage which could mean the end of her belief and her hope in Larry’s continued survival. She reveals her husband’s guilt to her son Chris. But she and her husband are finally defeated by a letter which Ann reveals. In this letter the missing son Larry had announced his intention to commit suicide because of his father’s dishonest action. After reading the letter Joe Keller shoots himself.

The action in act I begins on a Sunday morning with the main protagonist Joe Keller “sitting in the sun reading the want ads of the Sunday paper”(58). He is nearing sixty. He is a man of “stolid mind and build.” Now, he is a prosperous businessman “with the imprint of the machine-shop worker and boss still upon him” and “a man among men.” Later, we see Joe Keller playing a game with the neighbour’s children in which he, a ‘detective’ will send them to a ‘jail’ in his basement if they misbehave. The game distresses his wife Kate. Kate Keller entirely embodies a fiercely protective wife and mother, portraying with absolute conviction a woman whose own self-certainty approaches that of a religious fanatic. She warns Joe that he must stop ‘that whole jail business!’ Joe utters, “What have I got to hide?”(74). This indicates that
there is something to hide. According to Steven Centolla a well-known critic of Arthur Miller, Joe and Kate are "uncomfortable together because of their shared guilt and shame." One is over-confident and the other is anxious. However, he is self-deceived in his loneliness of "which the hedged in backyard is symbolic." During the Second World War he knowingly allows defective engines to be shipped to the United States Army. The cylinder heads cause their planes to malfunction and crash, as a result of which twenty-one pilots die. Joe Keller and his partner Steve Deever were put in prison. Steve Deever languishes in the prison while the court exonerates Joe Keller for his role in the catastrophe, as he was ill at home. Joe returns to his community and tries in vain to return to a life of normalcy pretending the crime never occurred.

The family harmony is maintained till Joe's son, Chris, returns home. Chris invites Ann Deever, Steve Deever's daughter to the Keller's home and tells Ann that he loves her. Ann replies that she had been waiting for him a long time to tell her that he loves her. She further says that he had started writing letters to her two years ago, and that she had begun to hope from that very time onwards that he would propose marriage to her.

Ann asks if he has any feeling of shame in loving her or in kissing her. Chris says that he did have a feeling of shame in the past, but that this feeling is now diminishing. Ann asks him to explain this feeling to her. Chris then tries to explain to Ann the reason why he has been experiencing a feeling of shame not only with regard to his love for her but also with regard to many other things. He reminds her that he was in "command of a company" during the war; and she says that she is aware of that. He then tells her that all the guys in his company had been killed in the course of the war, and that it had not been easy for him to forget this tragic fact. The men under
his command had repeatedly proved by their actions and by their talk, that they were real human beings with human hearts and human feelings. Seeing that they were getting killed in the course of the war, he had consoled himself with the thought that the men were not dying in vain, and that they were sacrificing their lives for some noble cause. He had consoled himself with the thought that some noble cause was being built up at the same time. Then the war ended, he had to come back home. But he was shocked to find himself in the midst of the same conditions, which had prevailed before the war. It was at that time he began to feel that even to win Ann as his wife would be something wrong. He had begun to feel that he did not deserve her as his wife if the world was such a selfish world and if all his men had laid down their lives in the war in vain. When Ann asks if he is still having the same feeling about her, Chris replies that now he definitely wants her. She tells him that he has the right to make use of everything, which is available to him, and that he has the right also to make use of the money, which his father has put at his disposal. Ann tells Chris that he has every reason to be proud of his father because his father, “put hundreds of planes in the air.”

Ann Deever has maturity and expressive sensitivity. She shares Chris’ high ideals. She disowns her father Steve Deever whom she believes to be guilty. Neither Ann nor her brother George has forgiven their father though Joe pleads to Ann on Steve’s behalf. Ann is a considerate person. She understands that Kate objects to the marriage because she believes Larry is still alive. Ann has no wish to hurt Kate but will show her Larry’s letter if Kate remains opposed to Ann’s marrying Chris. Daniel Schnider a reputed critic observes that Ann is the ‘message of death,’ for she brings the letter written by Larry before he committed suicide. This letter leads to Joe’s death. Kate is against Chris marrying Ann while Joe accepts the marriage. Ann sees
the marriage as her final chance to happiness. Kate plays her final card in order to prevent the marriage, which will signal the end of her hope; she reveals her husband's guilt to her son. Kate's character has more complicity.

In act II, George Deever forces Chris to question his father Joe Keller's role in the sordid business transaction. Earlier, George believed that his father was guilty but now he no longer believes it. He now reproaches Chris for (as he sees it) deceiving him. He is bitter because he has grown cynical about the ideals for which he sacrificed his own opportunities for happiness. Chris had fought in the war and he had seen many of his troops perish under his command, so his outlook differs from that of his father on the question of an individual's social responsibility. Chris charges his father with the killings of twenty-one men who flew the defective planes. There are a lot of scenes packed with intense debate about the individual's relation to society before Chris discloses his father's guilt and challenges him to accept responsibility for his actions. Joe believes that he is innocent and tries to justify his anti-social behaviour by proclaiming his right to ensure his family's survival. Joe defends his action in terms of the market place:

Joe: . . . Who worked for nothin’ in that war? When they work for nothin’ ‘I’ll work for nothin’. Did they ship a gun or a truck outa Detroit before they got their price? Is that clean? It’s dollars and cents, nickels and dimes; war and peace. It’s nickels and dimes, what’s clean? (125)

Joe blames the army for improper inspection and insists he took the chance for Chris. Chris responds with a burning fury:

Chris: . . . For me! – I was dying everyday and you were 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? (116)

Act III begins with Kate being “discovered on the rise, rocking ceaselessly in a
chair, straight at her thoughts,” and waiting for Chris to return at two o’clock in the
morning. The Keller’s neighbour Dr. Jim Bayliss appears and asks if she has heard
anything about Chris. Kate replies that she has heard nothing so far. She informs him
that Chris left the house after his heated argument with his father Joe Keller. Jim
understands Chris’s dilemma as he explains to the worried parents where Chris has
gone, “— everyman does have a star. The star of one’s honesty . . .”(118). Jim reveals
that he once left to do research but returned at Sue’s urging, “[a]nd now I live in the
usual darkness; I can’t find myself”(118). After contemplating upon his position Chris
returns home. He decides to leave his parents and his home and go somewhere else to
take up a job and earn his own living. Ann offers to go with Chris, but he says that he
cannot take her with him because she would never forget his father’s guilt and
therefore never enjoy any peace of mind in his company.

Kate’s objection to Ann marrying Chris still remains because Kate has not
ceased to believe that Larry is still alive and would one day come back. She shows
Larry’s letter to Kate. Larry’s letter reveals that he had felt ashamed of his father’s
criminal action, and so he did not wish to live any longer in this world. Kate feels
deeply shocked to go through this letter. Now she can no longer maintain that Larry is
still alive and would come back one day. When Joe Keller reads the contents of
Larry’s letter, he too feels ashamed of himself. His earlier argument, justifying his
actions now no longer hold good even in his own eyes. Towards the end of the play,
Joe realizes that his responsibilities extend beyond his family. He cannot restore life
to the dead, but he can give life (free from a sense of moral surrender) back to his living son, Chris. He is unable to deal with his guilt and shame in his son’s eyes and so he commits suicide by putting a bullet through his head. The play ends with Chris feeling guilty, and of his own hand in his father’s self-destruction. With Keller’s death the play forcefully repudiates anti-social behaviour that derives from the myth of privatism in American society.

At the beginning of the play we feel that self-made Joe, devoted Kate and loving Chris appear to be an ideal family. Their self-deception and guilt is laid bare as the play develops. Their nature is revealed as they react to the crisis that arises “whenever the hand of the distant past reaches out of its grave . . . to reveal some unreadable hidden order behind the amoral chaos of events.” “That emergence,” says Miller “is the point of All My Sons – that there are times when things do indeed cohere.”

In Joe Keller, Arthur Miller creates just such a representative type. Joe is a very ordinary man. He is decent, hard working and charitable, a man no one could dislike. But, like the protagonist of the ancient drama, he has a flaw or weakness. This in turn causes him to act wrongly. He is forced to accept responsibility – his suicide is necessary to restore the moral order of the universe and allow his son, Chris, to live free from guilt. Miller says, “Joe Keller’s trouble is not that he cannot tell right from wrong but that his cast of mind cannot admit that he, personally, has any viable connection with his world, his universe, or his society.”

Joe Keller commits crime against society for two reasons, namely self-preservation and self-assertion. He believes that he is a victim of others. To preserve his false image and his place in society he lies about his involvement in the crime that
sends unsuspecting pilots to their death. He blinds himself to the impulses that make him a danger to himself as well as to others.

There is nothing fantastic or fabulous or mythical about the characters in this play. It is not something impossible for a loving mother like Kate Keller to continue to believe that her son, who has been reported as missing and presumed dead, is still alive and would one day come back to her. It is not impossible for a father to believe that his greatest duty as a human being is to safeguard the financial interests of his family, as Keller does. It is not impossible for a young man or a middle-aged man to hold the idealistic belief that medical research is a nobler pursuit than medical practice, even though medical practice may bring more financial returns than medical research. Nor it is impossible for any man to hold the belief that there is something bigger and something more important than a man’s family, as Chris does. However, what strains our credulity is George’s and Ann’s terminating their relationship with their father after he has been convicted of fraud and sentenced to imprisonment. No son or daughter would forsake his or her father in this callous manner under any circumstances.

Criticism of materialism in society is depicted through Lydia’s husband Frank Lubey. Frank lacks culture, education and real intelligence, but has made money in business. All the subsidiary characters are perfectly convincing. Lydia and her handy husband Frank; Dr. Jim Bayliss and his jealous wife Sue — all four of them have successfully been drawn; and the conversation among all these persons, though not essential or indispensable to the action of the play, is perfectly life-like.

We notice that Ibsen’s influence is pervading in All My Sons. Miller’s social realism offers a dramatic situation that builds in the Ibsen manner, slowly, indirectly, but inevitably toward the fateful and conclusive confrontation between Keller and his
son. The conflict is set within a complex familial and social fabric that inflects and symbolically enriches it. The play has a traditional form and adheres to the conventions of the realistic theatre.

Miller sets the small talk of everyday suburban life against the plight of Chris's men lost on the field of battle. As noted by Alice Griffin, the family conversation revolves around the material: stick, champagne, dresses, cars and pressure cookers. The play is replete with metaphors, allusions and images. Miller makes use of figurative religious language; most of the metaphors and allusions are drawn from the bible. For instance, the actions of the Keller family are compared to biblical figures and events. Though the play is not about religion, the moral and legal crimes have religious significance. The social ramification of Joe’s crime is brought out by figurative language. The language implies that the Kellers have denied their obligation to the larger "family of man."

Miller’s work crystallizes the social climate of his time. The play is grounded in reality. Sheila Huftel has aptly observed that the play is “a flesh-and-blood social drama.” It is a play about our ability to connect with others and the world around us.

Death of a Salesman

Miller wrote Death of a Salesman in 1947. It reflects a contemporary scene of the late 1940s. In Death of a Salesman “what we have is the story of a vanished era, part real, part imaginary.” It is based on Miller’s memories of his teenage encounters with his “two pioneer uncles.” The impact of his uncles ultimately had less
to do with carpentry, however, and much more to do with *Death of a Salesman*. Both were salesmen.18

Miller regarded uncle Manny and uncle Lee, like Ben and Willy's father, as pioneering men. It was Manny Newman, especially, who entranced Miller for years and whose contradictions shaped Miller's conception of Willy Loman and his family. Manny Newman was not the sole model for Willy Loman. Miller drew on multiple models and incidents, both fictional and historical. While “making preliminary sketches of scenes and ideas for a salesman play,” Miller decided on the name ‘Loman.’ Miller reports, “‘Loman’ had the sound of reality, of someone who had actually lived, even if I had never known anyone by that name.”19 There were many sources for Willy and the other characters. Miller drew upon his literary forebears as well as his own personal experiences during the Great Depression, which he has often called a moral catastrophe. Desperate American salesman trying to fuel the dynamo fascinated him.

In the last twenty-four hours of salesman Willy Loman’s life his elder son, Biff, returns home after a long absence only to reopen the conflict with his father. Biff’s boyhood love for his father vanished when he discovered Willy’s extramarital affair. Biff, a star athlete in high school, has become, in Willy’s eyes, “a lazy bum.” Willy blames his son for failing to fulfill his early promise yet suffers guilt that the shock of the affair destroyed Biff. Biff blames his father for betraying a son’s trust, for excusing boyhood thefts, which have recurred as adult kleptomaniac, and for instilling in him the credo of wealth as success, making impossible the enjoyment of simple outdoor jobs. Wife and mother, Linda tries to keep the peace between them, though her loyalty is to Willy. Younger brother Happy has taken the approved
business route, starting at the bottom yet ending up only as an assistant to the assistant manager.20

Miller starts his story near the end. Willy is already on the point of cracking up when the action starts. The first act opens with Willy Loman, the protagonist returning home in the middle of the night from a sales trip. It was supposed to take him from his home in Brooklyn to New England which is his sales territory. He has cut the trip short because he cannot concentrate on his driving and has nearly hit a child in Yonkers, just North of New York city. Linda his wife anxiously asks him if he had an accident with the car. Perhaps he needs a change of glasses. When all these guesses prove to be wrong, Linda says:

Well, you'll just have to take a rest, Willy, you can't continue this way(9).

Her patience in dealing with him seems to be unlimited. Willy is fully aware of Linda’s devotion to him and he acknowledges this fact in the following words:

You’re my foundation and my support, Linda (13).

He tells his wife Linda that he just can’t seem to keep his mind on driving anymore. He inquires about his son Biff who has just come home for a visit after being away for a long time. Willy thinks about his son Biff when Biff was a senior in high school some fourteen years ago. Biff used to play football games and people used to come from all over the country to offer him scholarships. But then something happened after that year, because Biff has never again played football. Later we find out that Biff had flunked maths and had gone up to Boston to find his father and explain the failure to him. When he reached Willy’s hotel room in Boston, Biff found his father having an affair with a strange woman. After this episode, Biff seemed to hold a grudge against his father and could never again bring himself to trust Willy.
Linda supports Willy in his clashes with the boys, she loves her sons but she is not crazy about them. She asks Biff why he is so “hateful” towards his father. And she goes on to say, “Biff, dear, if you don’t have any feeling for him. You can’t have any feeling for me.” She loves Willy and states the case for him and those like him who work for the sake of their families.

Linda Loman from *Death of a Salesman* is one of those women that would have been an excellent asset to her family and others around her. She was a disheartened housewife who fulfilled all the tasks of the usual American housewife – which is central to accomplish the “American Dream” (American Dream by and large, included a family with a financially successful father figure, a caring wife responsible for cooking, cleaning, support and sex whenever the man demands it, minimum two children of the opposite sex, a nice house, a nice car and a white picket fence). To follow Linda’s example as she lives her life is considered by most Americans as a prime example to go by. She is loving, caring, understanding and will do or say anything for her hubby – Willy Loman. If ever Linda gets “out of line,” Willy puts her back in line with a big old, “shut-up,” and she would try her best to do what he asks. Linda’s intelligence and insight goes far beyond that of Willy’s, but she never showed him that side of her, for if the American Dream were to be true for the Lomans the man must be smarter than the female. Being influenced by the American Dream (by playing stupid in front of Willy) she was always on the outside looking in. When she was around her sons her insight on things shines like the early morning rays from the sun, but when she is around Willy her vocabulary diminishes to, “[y]es Dear,” or “what, Dear?”

Happy represents Willy’s sense of self-importance, ambition and blind servitude to societal expectations. Although he works as an assistant, to an assistant
buyer in a department store, Happy presents himself as supremely important. He is of low moral character; constantly with another woman practices bad business ethics and sleeps with the girlfriends of his superiors. He shares none of the poetry that erupts from Biff. Happy says that everybody around him is so false that he is “constantly lowering his ideals.” He is determined to go up in life: “I gotta show some of those pompous, self- important executives over there that Happy Loman can make the grade” (18). Happy feels emotionally empty:

Happy: . . . it’s what I always wanted. My own apartment, a car and plenty of women. And still, goddammit, I’m lonely (17).

Now, that Biff has returned home he and his brother Happy try to think of some job that Biff could get and settle down in New York. They think about a man, named Oliver, that Biff used to work for. Biff wants to ask Mr. Oliver for a loan of ten thousand dollars to begin a business of his own. They inform Willy about their plans. Willy thinks that together the two boys could absolutely conquer the world. Willy explains that the important thing in life is to be well-liked and to have personal attractiveness. He tells Biff that Mr. Oliver always thought highly of him, and reminds Biff of how much personal attractiveness Biff has.

In act II, we see that Willy is so pleased to have his boys with him that he decides to ask young Howard Wagner, the present owner of the firm for which Willy works, for a job in New York City. Howard Wagner explains to Willy that he cannot represent the firm in New England anymore because he has been doing harm for the firm. Thus, suddenly Willy’s day has reversed. He is without a job and has to go to an old friend and neighbour Charley, to borrow enough money to pay his insurance premium. We then find out that Willy has been borrowing fifty dollars a week from Charley for quite some time and then pretending that this amount is his salary.
Charley offers Willy a good job in New York which Willy refuses because he says he can’t work for Charley. The next day, Willy is to meet the boys for dinner in a restaurant.

Biff and Happy meet in the restaurant. Biff tells Happy that he has been living in illusion. He further says that he has stolen himself out of every job that he has ever had, and he wants to make everyone (especially Willy) understand that he is no longer bringing home any prizes. But when Willy arrives, he tells the boys that he has been fired and refuses to listen to Biff’s story. Willy simply pretends that Biff has another appointment the following day. Biff gets furious and is about to make a scene. When Willy goes to the bathroom, Biff leaves the restaurant out of frustration. Happy who has picked up two girls, follows him and leaves Willy alone.

Later that night, when Biff comes home he finds Willy out in the backyard planting seeds and talking to his brother Ben. But this is only in Willy’s illusions because he has not seen his brother for many years. Ben has actually been dead for some nine months. Biff explains to Willy that it would be best if they break with each other and never see one another again. Biff tries once again to explain that he is no longer a leader of men and that he is a common person who has no outstanding qualities. But Willy refuses to believe him and tells Biff once again how great Biff could be. Biff becomes frustrated because Willy refuses to see the truth. He finally breaks down and sobs and asks Willy to forget him. Willy believes that Biff is still a child who needs him. He then resolves on suicide because with twenty thousand dollars, Biff could be such a magnificent person. Willy is every bit as son-fixated as Joe Keller, and while the boys are young, nearly all his hopes are pinned on their future. His sons, Biff and Happy are also failures but Willy doesn’t want to believe this. He wants his sons, especially Biff, to succeed where he has not. He believes his
boys are great and cannot understand why they are not successful. This is a major source of conflict throughout the play. Willy sticking to the success myth directed the education of his sons. His sons have been trained to work hard, for industry is important to get success. They have also been instructed in the oft-repeated ideas of both the “virtue” and the “personality” school. Willy winks at his sons’ faults in the name of personality. Willy finds in his sons those qualities which point towards success. As high school boys, they are leaders, popular with the crowd, athletic and handsome.

Willy Loman is an elderly salesman lost in false hopes and illusions. The sales firm he works for no longer pays him salary. Working on straight commission, Willy cannot bring home enough money to pay his bills. After thirty-four years with the firm, they have spent his energy and discarded him. As Willy grows old, he has trouble distinguishing between past and present – between illusion and reality – and is often lost in flashbacks where much of the story is told. Willy eventually commits suicide so that Biff can have the insurance money to become successful with.

Willy lionized his son Biff and kept telling him that he had a great future before him. Biff is seen as an underachiever by Willy, while Biff sees himself as trapped in Willy’s grandiose fantasies. After his epiphany in Bill Oliver’s office, Biff determines to break through the lies surrounding the Loman family in order to come to realistic terms with his own life. Intent on revealing the simple and humble truth behind Willy’s fantasy, Biff longs for the territory (the symbolically free West) obscured by his father’s blind faith in a skewed, materialist version of the American Dream. Biff has an internal struggle between pleasing his father and doing what he feels is right. Biff wants to be outside on a cattle ranch while Willy wants him behind
a corporate desk. Eventually, Biff sees the truth and realizes that he is a "dime a
dozen" and "no great leader of men." He tells this to Willy who is outraged:

Willy: I am not a dime a dozen! I am Willy Loman and you are Biff
Loman! (105).

Willy died with his illusions intact. Biff realizes how foolish his father’s
dreams were. Willy achieves a professional understanding of himself and the
fundamental nature of the sales profession but he fails to realize his personal failure
and betrayal of his soul and family through the meticulously constructed artifice of his
life. He cannot grasp the true personal, emotional and spiritual understanding of
himself as a literal "Loman" or "low man." Willy’s failure to recognize the anguished
love offered to him by his family is crucial to the climax of his torturous day, and the
play presents this incapacity as the real tragedy. Despite this failure, Willy makes the
most extreme sacrifice in his attempt to leave an inheritance that will allow Biff to
fulfill the American Dream.

Willy’s brother Ben’s final mantra, “[t]he jungle is dark, but full of
diamonds” (106) – turns Willy’s suicide into a metaphorical moral struggle, a final
skewed ambition to realize his full commercial and material capacity. His final act,
according to Ben is “not like an appointment at all” but like a “diamond . . . hard and
rough.” In the absence of any real degree of self-knowledge or truth, Willy is able to
achieve a tangible result. In some respect, Willy does experience a sort of revelation,
as he finally comes to understand that the product he sells is he. Through the
imaginary advice of Ben, Willy ends up fully believing his earlier assertion to
Charley:

Willy: After all the highways, and the trains and the appointments,
and the years, you end up worth more dead than alive (77).
Willy Loman was host to many flaws and deficiencies ranging from suicidal tendencies to psychotic disorders. However, these shortcomings did not account for his tragic end. It was society who stripped him of his dignity, piece by piece. It was society who stripped him of his lifestyle and his own sons who stripped him of hope. The most obvious flaw in society is greed, the desire to get ahead of the next guy. This malady is present on a national level. It is the philosophy of business that comprises the dreams of man. Sometimes, this can drive man to great things, sometimes it can drive a man to ruin. Willy was driven to the latter not by his own greed, but by the greed of others. The greedy were the developers who took away the sun and gave birth to shadows, his boss who reduced him to commission and his sons who reduced him to a failure. The next largest flaw in society is a lack of compassion. This could be as a result of almost overwhelming greed, the main culprit being big business:

Willy: . . . I’m always in a race with the junkyard! I just finished paying for the car and it’s on it last legs. The refrigerator consumes belts like a goddam maniac. They time those things. They time them so when you finally paid for them, they’re used up. (57)

Willy’s belief in this statement drew him to say that big business lacked compassion. It is because of this belief that he is abandoned by Biff and disowned by Happy and left babbling in a public toilet in act II. It is this flaw which allowed him to die a slow death and played the greatest role in his eventual downfall. The third largest flaw in society (particularly American society) is the lack of a social safety net. A net which includes a pension plan and medical care which would have helped people like Willy Loman. It was the direct result of the flaws in society that led Willy
to his undoing. It was the greed that was ever-pervasive around him that led to his unhappiness. It was the lack of compassion from society which allowed his unhappiness to flourish and which eventually consumed him. In the end, it was the lack of a social safety net which failed to save him from himself. Miller has a lot of sympathy for Willy. Willy’s wife Linda proclaims that “attention must be paid. He’s not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog,” because he is a “human being.”

Willy Loman represents for many the commonplace “individual attempting to gain his ‘rightful’ position in society.” Miller occasionally bestows upon Willy a capacity for self-knowledge within the marketplace, as evident during the scene in Howard’s office:

Willy: . . . 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!(64).

Willy knows America is no isocracy in which all people have equal power.21

We see the inhuman nature of the American competitive society which gets rid of an employee as soon as he ceases to be a source of profit to his employer. The way the American Dream has let down Willy and the manner in which his company has treated him are largely responsible for Willy’s decision to commit suicide. The manner in which society treats Willy shows that he is a victim of society. Howard’s father treated Willy fairly well but Howard’s attitude towards Willy is callous. Towards the end of the play, Willy realizes that he is powerless against the economic competitive system. Willy is deceived by the American Dream. He persists in believing in this American myth to the point of absurdity. The social system of which he is a product has an iron hold upon him. Like most other Americans, he ardently
believes in this law of success. According to this law, there is no room in it for a man
who proves a failure, and the formula of success is the one that has been described
above, namely personal magnetism, the art of cultivating people, the amiable smile
and personal attractiveness.

In the Requiem, at Willy’s grave, Linda gives an outlet to her suppressed
sorrow, even though she does not cry. She is puzzled by Willy’s action in having
killed himself:

Linda: . . . Why did you do it? I search and search and I search, and I
can’t understand it, Willy (112).

Her brief soliloquy by the side of Willy’s grave is deeply moving. At Willy’s
funeral it is Biff who says that his father had “the wrong dreams,” and it is he who
speaks of the real worth of his father by saying that “there’s more of him in that front
stoop than in all the sales he ever made”(110). But Happy cannot see the reality. Like
his father, he is destined to live a fruitless life trying for something that will not
happen. Of Willy Loman he says, “Willy Loman did not die in vain. He had a good
dream. It’s the only dream you can have – to come out number-one man. He fought it
out here, and this is where I’m gonna win it for him”(111). He is the stunted
incarnation of Willy’s worst traits and the embodiment of the lie of the happy
American Dream. As such, Happy is a difficult character with whom we empathize.
He is one-dimensional and static throughout the play. His empty vow to avenge
Willy’s death by finally “beat[ing] this racket” provides evidence of his critical
condition: for Happy, who has lived in the shadow of the inflated expectations of his
brother, there is no escape from the Dream’s indoctrinated lies. Happy’s diseased
condition is irreparable – he lacks even the tiniest spark of self-knowledge or capacity
for self-analysis. He does share Willy’s capacity for self-delusion, trumpeting himself
as the assistant buyer at his store, when in reality he is only an assistant to the assistant buyer. He does not possess a hint of the latent thirst for knowledge that proves Biff’s salvation. Happy is a doomed, utterly duped figure, destined to be swallowed up by the force of blind ambition that fuels his insatiable sex drive. He is trying to find his way in life and is confident that he is on the right track.

The form of *Death of a Salesman* was an attempt as much as anything else to convey the bending of time. There are two or three sorts of time in the play. One is social time, one is psyche time, the way we remember things, and the third is the sense of time created by the play and shared by the audience.²²

With the help of figurative language Miller brings out Willy’s struggle to achieve the American Dream. The American Dream is exemplified by the mortgage, the refrigerator, the car, sports etc. Miller also reinforces imagery of falling through the dialogue.²³ From page to stage, Miller meticulously structures *Death of a Salesman* upon a cluster of retrogressive images, images that correspond directly with Loman’s fall. Willy speaks standard language. It is all about success. He uses the tasteless cant popular in the American 30s. His wisdom expressed in platitudes is taken from commonsense authorities. Biff and Happy, like their parents, try to be eloquent "by leaving their lower-middle-class dialect with high-class diction.”

The real fabric of language is here woven of the most ordinary stuff. When Happy tries to impress the two prostitutes at the restaurant, he speaks in a more formal tone, “[w]hy don’t you bring – excuse me, miss, do you mind? I sell champagne, and I’d like you to try my brand. Bring her a champagne, Stanley” (79).²⁴

The importance of trees as a metaphor is magnified by the word ‘timberland.’ It stands for the “frontier origins in the virgin timberland of Alaska.”²⁵ Refrigerator is
another material aspect which pervades Willy’s life. It is a symbol of economic competition.

Cars are the American symbol of individual mobility, freedom and social status. Another symbol is that of the West. The American Western territories suggested a freedom to explore, settle and make money in a manner impossible in the eastern states or in Europe. Miller inverts this particular dream-value in American experience.

In act II, Willy imagines that he can make seeds grow in his garden. He states, “I’ve got to get some seeds, right away. Nothing’s planted. I don’t have a thing in the ground”(96). The implication is that his life is a barren thing. Nothing has grown out of his endeavors. Willy tells Ben, “A man can’t go out the way he came in, Ben, a man has got to add up to something”(99). But it is already too late and his gestures of planting in the hope of future are desperate and futile.

Willy’s house has been boxed in by “[b]ricks and windows, windows and bricks”(12). These buildings symbolize “modern post-world war II technological culture.”26 Through out the play metaphors of trees and sports signify Willy’s struggle to achieve the American Dream in the American business world.

In conclusion, Arthur Miller’s Death of a Salesman is a damning criticism of American society of the 1940s. Willy Loman is an average man whose dreams and expectations are shattered by the false values of the society he put his faith in. He slowly withers away under the pressures of social performance. At the end of the play, Willy’s suicide demonstrates the enormous strength of the dream. He even gives up his life for the ‘twenty thousand dollar proposition’ in order for Biff to be ‘successful.’ Death of a Salesman is still the play that comes most readily to mind – to the heart – whenever one fears for one’s place: when one loses one’s way, or one’s
job. Salesman is there for us in manifold moments, whenever we falter, when we feel the earthquake, when we bluster or pose or plant seeds in the moonlight. The achievement of Salesman is one of exposing vulnerability at every stage of life.\textsuperscript{27} His realism as manifested in this play is a clear eyed and even-hand treatment of the contemporary ethos.

**The Crucible**

When the play *The Crucible*\textsuperscript{28} was written in 1953, Miller was concerned with recent events in the United States. Two powerful nations – the USA and the USSR – emerged at the end of World War II. Both the countries were distrustful of each other despite having been allies in the War. A battle for nuclear weapon superiority arose between the two; the capitalist United States versus the Communist Soviet Union. Mistrust and hostility grew between them – giving rise to the ‘cold war’ – and the United States worked at home and abroad to oppose the spread of Communism.

In this climate of fear, a United States Senator, Joseph McCarthy alleged that government departments were being infiltrated by communists and he waged a campaign against them. He accused and vilified many public servants including teachers and civil servants as well as many other prominent personalities. He said that past years of Democratic Government were “twenty years of treason.” In the context described above, Americans were a prey to fear and high leaders in the government could not act freely without taking into consideration the effect it might have on McCarthy’s investigation. As most people readily accepted these false and irrational charges the effectiveness of the American Government was hampered. Miller was
caught up in the frenzy and was asked to apologize for having an interest in Marxism when he was young. Miller refused to apologize when he was brought before the House Committee of Un-American Activities so he was sent for trial. Initially he was fined and given a suspended prison sentence, but he appealed and was acquitted. Miller fought to maintain his dignity and his principles. These events are very similar to those which occur in the play The Crucible.

After the premiere of The Crucible, in an interview, Miller discussed “diabolism”- the fear and hatred of opposites – being one of the main themes of the play. He explained:

When tensions exist, this fear is organized. In Salem, these people regarded themselves as holders of a light. If this light were extinguished, they believed the world would end. When you have an ideology, which feels itself so pure, it implies an extreme view of the world. Because they are white, opposition is completely black. 29

In The Crucible, with the Salem witchcraft trials of 1692, as a moral frame and point of departure, Miller examines the permanent conditions of the climate of hysteria. The New England tragedy was for him, dramatically, a fortuitous choice because it is accessible to us imaginatively; as one of the few severely irrational eruptions American society has witnessed, and it retains still its primitive power to compel attention. It exhibits features of the classically hysterical situation, the strange moral alchemy by which the accused becomes inviolable; the disrepute which overtakes the testimony of simple intelligence; the insistence on public penance; the willingness to absolve if guilt is confessed.30

It is possible that Miller was prompted to the composition of this play by the malignant politico-cultural pressures of American society, but whatever the impulse,
it has resulted in a drama of arresting polemic distinction. As observed by Richard Hayes, Miller “has admittedly disclaimed intent of contemporary reference in the play, choosing to see in it only the tragedy of another society. But it would be fatuous of Miller to pretend that our present cultural climate had not always a place in the foreground of his mind. Surely then, he can see that the Salem witch hunts and our own virulent varieties are parallel only in their effects, not in their causes.”

The Crucible is an allegorical re-telling of the McCarthy era red scare that occurred in the United States after the Second World War. In act I, a few young girls appear to be dancing around a bubbling cauldron in the woods when Rev. Parris discovers them. Abigail, Rev. Parris’ niece is one of them. In an attempt to protect herself from punishment when her cousin falls ill after Rev. Parris finds them dancing, she instigates the Salem witch trials and leads the charge of accusations. This leads to the belief that the girls were under the spell of the devil. To escape punishment they accuse other women of the town of being witches. They are ‘bewitched.’ The community of Salem was narrow-minded. The church did not tolerate the slightest difference, but they rather preferred all the Christians to be conformists. The church was obviously against the devil, and at the same time it did not tolerate any leisure activities such as dancing. From a historical viewpoint, the young girls in the colonial society were given little or no freedom. Children were expected to be mature adults at an extremely young age and also they were not allowed to speak until they were asked to speak. They were expected to be well-mannered and behave well. Abigail, however, was a wild adolescent who wanted to try different things such as dancing in the forest.

Abigail introduced her friends to Tituba who taught them how to dance in the woods and to conjure up spirits. She motivated not only her friends, but also herself to
practice witchcraft. She drank chicken blood to make a charm against John Proctor's wife out of jealousy. Despite her accusations, Abigail is an unabashed liar who charges witchcraft against those who oppose her. She was deeply in love with John Proctor and tried to steal John away from his wife Elizabeth. For instance, she told Proctor that he still loved her deep inside of his heart and that he was being a coward for going back to his cold, bitter wife. She said that once she kills Elizabeth, they would be free to love one another. She felt that if it wasn't for Elizabeth, John would come back to her. She thought her relationship with him was sincere while John believed that it was just lust. She tried to instigate John against Elizabeth, and gossiped about Elizabeth to persuade him to come back to her. She accuses Elizabeth Proctor in an attempt to take her place as Proctor's wife. Abigail was removed by Elizabeth from her house for having an affair with John Proctor. Abigail is a malicious and vengeful girl. Proctor tries to avoid any involvement in the Salem witchcraft trials, even though the friends and neighbours whom he has known all his life are condemned as witches. He is a respectable individual who recognizes authority as essential for the community but is unwilling to bow down to a corrupt authority, represented by Rev. Parris. Rev. Parris is the local Minister and is mainly responsible for the witch trials. He is a materialistic man who places gold candlesticks in the church. He is in his mid-forties and "there is very little good to be said for him."

His insecurity causes him to ally himself with the authorities and to view Proctor as an enemy. He 'believed he was being persecuted wherever he went, despite his efforts to win people on his side.' He is a widower with no interest in children. He believed in disciplining children. Even with his parishioners he regards any act of indiscipline as an assault on his authority. Abigail and the girls start to cry out against many other towns' people. These accusations lead to trials.
In act II, John Proctor, the main protagonist is seen talking to his wife, Elizabeth. Her name has been mentioned at the trials and they are both fearful of the outcome of this situation. Proctor convinces his maid Mary Warren, to denounce Abigail and her friends. In act III, Proctor goes to the court in an attempt to save not only his wife but also many other innocent victims. Towards the end of act III, he accuses Abigail of lying and leading the people astray. Later he becomes one of the accused. He suffers for months in prison, in confession of having resorted to witchcraft. His reason is that he is really different from them:

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

Mary rejoins her friends and Proctor’s wife lies to save Proctor’s reputation. Elizabeth sacrifices her principle to save her husband’s life; her motive here was love. She is no longer self-righteous, she says, “I cannot judge you, John,” and adds; “As you will, I would have it” (118). She sacrifices her principles for her personal ends.

The action in act IV takes place in the town jail. Rev. Hale and Rev. Parris are both trying to convince people to confess to being witches and therefore avoid being executed. Rev. Hale is a foil to Danforth. Danforth is the Deputy-Governor. Initially he appears to be well-versed with books concerning evil. Rev. Hale has evil neatly “caught, defined and calculated.” Being more sensitive than Danforth he allows “doubt to enter, like a corrosive chemical into his soul.” As a result, Hale no longer is convinced that he is privy to the decrees of the most high; on the contrary, asserting that God’s will is often in the darkness, he assumes the radical ambiguity of the moral questions. Danforth is an orthodox Puritan. He makes sharp and rational distinctions.
Though a proud man behind his stiff posture, now and then lurks the fear that he might be in serious error. He fully believes in the existence of evil spirits. He is the chief magistrate. He considers principles sacred and would not hesitate to sacrifice all human life for a single principle. He is the personification of the theocratic power in the play. As a symbol of authority, Danforth assumes exact knowledge of “God’s law” and taking a rigid stance on the letter of that law he pursues the logic of what he conceives the facts to their inevitable end.

John Proctor, who has now been accused by Abigail herself is in custody. He confesses to being a wizard. Despite his confession, the men in power refuse it; it is not enough. For the sake of his children, he strives for compromise. He signs the confession to save his life, but the judges demand that the confession be made public and he finds that he cannot live in society uncommitted. He must be totally and publicly with them. There is no middle ground of private commitment and public neutrality. This is John Proctor’s final dilemma. Miller does not allow the individual at this point in his career to escape from his social obligations into his private life. He is subject to social and moral pressures which make true nobility difficult to achieve. He redeems himself by his commitment and involvement with the community. The underlying tone of the play is that an individual is sometimes faced with choices over which he has no defenses. In such a situation John Proctor becomes a victim of the social situation and a hero in his own mind. Making yet another moral decision, John refuses to denounce others and thus is executed for being a wizard.

All who tried to oppose the court such as Giles Corey or John Proctor were put in custody and those who refused to confess such as Rebecca Nurse or Proctor were executed. Throughout the story Miller demonstrates that it is important to stand up for what one believes even if it means going against the flow or even if it means losing
one's life. Putnam and Parris disagree about church politics. The Putnams and the Nurses have been contesting each others’ claim for a plot of land. Thomas Putnam wants personal vengeance because the community had not chosen his candidate for ministership. The Putnams represent the worst aspects of Salem society such as jealousy, small-mindedness and greed. It was Ann Putnam that sent her daughter to conjure spirits in the first place and her husband Thomas Putnam sought to gain from the tragedy of others. They attributed the death of seven of their children to Rebecca Nurse. They are wealthy land-owners and hold grudges against many in the town. Rebecca is a very kind woman who is the midwife to the Putnams. She resembles Danforth to a certain extent. She would not sacrifice a principle even if it should cost her life. She has no sense of guilt. She tells John, “[l]et you fear nothing! Another judgment waits us all!”(125). She sees little of life’s complexity. When John lies to save his wife, Rebecca is merely astonished. The Putnams feel she is a witch because seven out of eight of their children died at birth.

Salem quickly turns into a melting pot of suspicion and vengeance with nearly everyone trying to pull power out of the pot. The witch trials provided an avenue to bring hostilities out into the open in a theocratic society that had little opportunity for speaking out. The witch trials are metaphorically a crucible for people’s grudges and their seeking of revenge. The play shows how people can give into fear and superstition.

In The Crucible Miller has submerged the characters in an atmosphere of “evil” such that their true personalities are revealed to the audience. The characters are subconsciously divided into “good” and “evil.” This division by the audience imparts a sense of reality upon the play.
The issue in the play is not mere psycho-socio witchcraft but it is a combination of strife over matters of politics, land ownership, power struggles, personal vengeance, individual responsibility and the limitations of the judicial system. The issues raised and the characters portrayed in \textit{The Crucible} are what make the play so timeless. The issues are relevant to any society, and the characters resemble people in any society, the text can be applied to readers of any society or any time. Miller believed that every individual should have a sense of involvement and commitment to society. When an individual fails in his duties to society then he has no right to assert his individuality. His characters carry the essential social message of the play. In \textit{The Crucible} Miller returns to a chronological narrative and moves between different locales, and a bigger cast of characters.

We have no way of being sure what the language of the time really sounded like as there are no recordings. There had been settlers in Massachusetts for quite a short time, so the American English that we know today wouldn't have existed. But by looking at documents from that time, including verbatim transcripts of the court proceedings, Miller was able to create a historical feel to the language, which makes it easier for us to feel we are being transported back to the community of that time. Miller is trying to establish a society that is unfamiliar but that we can believe in. He uses various features of language to achieve this effect.

Miller makes the language distinctive by combining a number of features: using old-fashioned, archaic words like 'bid' (told), 'aye' and 'naye' (for 'yes' and 'no'), 'hearty' (well). As well as other unfamiliar expressions such as 'blink' (ignore), 'Goody' (Mrs) and 'open with me' (tell the truth). Unfamiliar use of the verb 'to be' such as 'it were' instead of 'it was' and 'there be' instead of 'there is.' He also makes use of double negatives as in 'He cannot discover no medicine' and 'I don't compact
with no devil." He changed the normal word order: 'I like not to search a house.' The second person — you — is used prominently: 'Let you strike out,' 'Be you foolish.' There is a rustic, colloquial feel to the language which is helped by dropping the final 'g' from the words such as dreamin', carryin' and nothin.' Biblical and religious references abound, confirming the nature of this strongly religious community. Elizabeth's description of Abigail's entrance to the court — 'where she walks, the crowd will part like the sea for Israel' — is particularly memorable.32

According to Stephen Marino, "Miller uses figurative language — images, symbols, metaphors — indigenous to the society of the play's character."33 Through language, he depicts how western world perceived the communist threat. Senator Joseph McCarthy referred to "the fires of communism that are sweeping across Europe and Asia and flickering on the shores of America."34 He also described the fight against communism using opposites, "The struggle between light and darkness, between good and evil, before life and death."

Miller makes frequent use of the opposites white and dark, to bring out the difference between right and wrong.

Giles: . . . [To all] Think on it. Wherefore is everybody suing everybody else? Think on it now, it's a deep thing, and dark as a pit . . . (36).

The images of 'fire' and 'burning' refer to burning on earth, and have political implications. The poetic language of the play supports Miller's social and political concerns.
A View from the Bridge

The play’s background and the parlous political times during which it was written provide new insights into Miller’s A View from the Bridge. The play deals with the ‘American Dream.’ The immigrants came from countries like Italy in search of a better life for themselves. The play is set in the 1950s and so reflects the attitudes and feelings of the time. The play was written in 1955 when Italy was going through a major economic depression because of the outcome of the Second World War. America was seen as the land of opportunity by many people, be it to start a new life or escape their past. People believed that America held the key which would open a world of freedom and prosperity. For the people in Sicily the ultimate goal of their life is the ‘American Dream.’

The play is about Eddie, an Italian immigrant and longshoreman living in Brooklyn. In Timebends Miller speaks at length of his interest in the Brooklyn waterfront and of his relationship with Vincent James “Vinny” Longhi, whom he describes as “a new member of the bar with political ambitions.” Christopher Bigsby in his The Cambridge Companion describes in detail how Miller came across this story. Miller with the help of Longhi and Berenson entered the largely Italian, Brooklyn waterfront neighborhood, the dark, dangerous and corrupt world of Red Hook. From this atmosphere and from a Longhi anecdote the story and atmosphere of A View from the Bridge seems to have been born:

In the course of time Longhi mentioned a story he’d recently heard of a longshoreman who had ratted to the Immigration Bureau on two brothers, his own relatives who were living illegally in his very home, in order to break an engagement between one of them and his niece.
The squealer was disgraced, and no one knew where he had gone off to, and some whispered that he had been murdered by one of the brothers.\textsuperscript{37}

Miller’s knowledge of the Red Hook piers rife with gangsterism, corruption and mob-run unions was complemented in Italy with a first-hand look at the Brooklyn waterfront’s Sicilian background and origins. The raw truths and the crude life of the Red Hook waterfront had their origins in Italy and Miller leapt at the opportunity to go to Italy, guided by Longhi and Berenson.\textsuperscript{38}

The immigrants often lived in the most run down parts of the town and found themselves out of work and with little money to live on or send to their families at home. Secondly, there was a wide difference between two cultures, the Italian and the American on the subject of ethics and law. One of the most important Italian ‘laws’ is that nobody should reveal the information of illegal immigrants entering the area, as the immigrants are most likely to be somebody’s relatives. It also meant that the people who have been hiding the immigrants were in danger from immigration officers. A good example of what happened to somebody who reported illegal immigrants is that of Vinny Bolzano. When Vinny Bolzano reports his uncle to the officers, the people “pulled him down the stairs – three flights . . . they spit on him on the street.” Spitting on a relative in the street shows how disgusted the family was with Vinny, as the rest of the neighbourhood would have been watching, so they could let everyone know how they felt. The whole neighborhood was crying and felt sorry for the family. They felt that way because of the strong community law. In Italy, family honour is the ultimate value in life.

The protagonist of \textit{A View from the Bridge} Eddie lives with his wife Beatrice and niece Catherine. The play starts with them awaiting the arrival of
Beatrice's two cousins Marco and Rodolpho. They are in America illegally. They are illegal immigrants looking for work in order to fund their families at home in Italy. Rodolpho and Catherine seem to like each other, which upsets Eddie as he has somewhat unhealthy feelings for his young niece. This ultimately leads to the downfall of Eddie.

In act I, we are introduced to Eddie and his family. Eddie, an Italian, is a simple man living in America. He works on the docks to support his family. Though he loves his family there is tension between him and his wife. He is a proud man who has no control over his fate. He has no control over his emotions which eventually leads to his downfall. His family includes his wife and niece. Beatrice, the long-suffering wife of Eddie is not as dim as we first think. She knows what is going on between her husband and Catherine, yet loyalty prevents her from acting upon it. She is very wise and is an extremely likeable character. Catherine is the young niece of Eddie whom he and his wife treat like a daughter. She is only a young girl of seventeen, and has been kept wrapped up in cotton wool by Eddie. She is striving to live her own life as Eddie is a little too protective of her. She wants to work as a stenographer after she graduates. She is oblivious throughout the play to Eddie's lust for her. She constantly seeks his approval and forgiveness. Even at the very conclusion of the play, we sense that she has strong feelings towards Eddie and is flirtatious with him. She says, "Eddie I never meant to do nothing bad to you" (439).

Though outwardly they seem happy enough, there is an underlining feeling that there is more between Eddie and Catherine than just a father type of relationship. Eddie is a little too protective and there seems to be some unhealthy feelings between the two, a little bit of sexual tension. There are also signs of tension between the husband and wife. Beatrice is jealous of Eddie's relationship with Catherine and
openly addresses Eddie’s sexual impotence and lack of physical affection for her. She tries to make Catherine understand that she is old enough to take her own decisions, she should not rely on Eddie anymore. While Beatrice seems more aware of her need for Eddie’s approval than Catherine does, she is equally desperate for it. Catherine wants to take a job as a secretary, but Eddie is unsure, he wants to keep her as his little girl and sees this as a sign that she is growing up. Beatrice and Catherine attempt to persuade Eddie to allow her to take the job by buttering him up, for example, Catherine gives him a cigar and also lights it for him. Beatrice informs that two of her cousins Rodolpho and Marco will stay with them for a while, as they need a job to earn money. Rodolpho, Beatrice’s young cousin has come to America in search of the dream, to get money and he wants to own a motorbike. He is blonde and very flamboyant. He likes to sing and dance and is something of an entertainer. He is described as vaguely effeminate.

The ways in which Italian people entertain themselves are quite similar to American forms of entertainment. Rodolpho obviously knows how to use a gramophone. Rodolpho reveals a little about himself. Rodolpho, the platinum blonde is a cooking, sewing and dancing full-blooded Italian, and he is the greatest threat to Eddie Carbone. Marco, Rodolpho’s brother is the quieter and older of the two. Marco physically resembles the Sicilian stereotype, with dark skin and dark hair. He is also very strong and he can easily load the whole ship by himself. He is a strong man with a deep sense of family loyalty and looks after his brother. He has a family at home in Italy and wants to make as much money as possible to support them. Marco’s plan is to make enough money to survive and be able to send some of that money to his wife and his three kids back in Italy who are starving and save his oldest son who is sick. He knows that it isn’t as good as people say it is in America and that one does not get
paid as much as people say. He has a good understanding of what it is like in America. However, Marco knows that he will be earning money because he needs to send money back to his family in Italy and also he needs to pay the people who brought him into America illegally so they will find him work to enable him to pay them.

When Marco and Rodolpho first come to stay with the Carbones, Eddie is happy and proud to house “submarines” in his home. Eddie rebels against American immigration laws and brings Italians into the country, encouraged and honoured by the surrounding community. However, Eddie is suspicious. Eddie’s tale about Vinny Bolzano is, in reflection a reference to Eddie’s own fate. The arrival of the cousins changes the scenario in the family. There is an instant attraction between Rodolpho and Catherine, which Eddie picks up on, and doesn’t like it at all. Eddie ignores Rodolpho and simply prefers to talk to Marco. There is tension between him and Rodolpho. There is tension between Beatrice and Eddie is heightened with the new arrivals specially – Rodolpho. Eddie is unhappy with Catherine showing interest in Rodolpho and tries to convince her that Rodolpho only wants her to become a legal citizen of the USA. Beatrice in a tete-tete with Catherine persuades her to break the existing bond between her and Eddie and be independent of him. Eddie takes an immediate dislike to Rodolpho because of Catherine’s attraction to him. It is Eddie’s jealousy of Rodolpho that leads him to turn Rodolpho and Marco in. Eddie is forced to ignore his tribal law when he is threatened by Rodolpho’s relationship with Catherine.

In act II, we see the budding relationship between Catherine and Rodolpho. We never know if Rodolpho truly loves Catherine. Their romance is devoid of passion. Unlike his brother Marco, he does not seek revenge on Eddie for calling
Immigration or abusing his fiancé in front of him. He wants to be an American citizen at all costs. There is a possibility that he does not love Catherine. Like Eddie fears, he may only want to gain citizenship through their marriage. The conversation between Rodolfo and Catherine in the beginning of act II does little to clarify this issue. Catherine does ask him whether he would marry her if they had to move to Italy, but Rodolfo does not seem sincere. Rodolfo never once describes why he wants to marry Catherine; he just wants to get married to someone in the U.S. where there is work. Suddenly, the mood shifts to violence and shock, with a drunken Eddie coming in. There are feelings of homosexuality and incest as Eddie kisses Catherine and Rodolfo. Catherine decides to marry Rodolfo and follow his rules rather than Eddie's. Eddie goes to the lawyer, Alfieri, to see if there is a way to negotiate American law to simply stop the marriage. He is shocked when Alfieri implies that he could inform the authorities to protect Catherine but he realizes that the only way is to go against Sicilian social-community law.

Though Eddie feels he has won, yet, he has only succeeded in isolating himself and pushing Catherine away from him. Alfieri and Eddie have another meeting but Eddie does not listen to the lawyer. Alfieri, the immigrant-son lawyer and an Italian-American is true to his ethnic identity. He is a well-educated man who studies and respects American law, but is still loyal to Italian customs. He practices in Red Hook and tries to explain American legal statues to men like Eddie Carbone, reared in the traditions of Sicilian family and tribal loyalties, imperatives and taboo. He provides what can essentially be termed as the view from the bridge, an objective picture of Eddie Carbone and the 1950s Red Hook, Brooklyn community. He has one of the most important roles in the play as he brings everything together and helps us understand what is going on. He is not emotionally attached with the events and so
offers an unbiased recollection of the happenings of the small Italian family. Alfieri is the symbolic bridge between American laws and tribal laws. The old and new worlds are codified in the immigrant-son Alfieri. From his vantage point, Alfieri attempts to present an un-biased and reasonable view of the events of the play and make clear the greater social and moral implications in the work.

Eddie is desperate and ultimately informs the law authorities about the illegal immigrants – Marco and Rodolpho. Eddie betrays both Marco and Rodolpho. The fact that he could even think about betraying his family; not just Marco and Rodolpho, but Beatrice and Catherine as well shows a vast difference between Red Hook and Italy. The treatment that Eddie receives from Lipari and his friend Louis shows us how disgusted they are with Eddie’s actions. Eddie’s decision to break community law is also influenced by his love for Catherine; his betrayal is out of self-interest. Eddie broke the natural law, a more stigmatizing and damning force than either Sicilian or American laws. Ironically, the failure of American law to prevent the marriage of Rodolpho and Catherine causes Eddie to once again revert to his community customs and seek a final Sicilian revenge against Marco. What is important to Eddie in the end is his name. Eddie attempts to kill Marco rather than offer forgiveness. Eddie’s inability to negotiate between Sicilian and American culture destroys him. Eddie is placed in relation to his Sicilian-American society. Miller observes:

The mind of Eddie Carbone is not comprehensible apart from its relation to his neighbourhood, his fellow workers, his social situation. His self-esteem depends upon their estimate of him, and his value is created largely by his fidelity to the code of his culture.\textsuperscript{39}

The central conflict in the play is between tribal and country law. The characters must reconcile between the social laws of the Red Hook Sicilian-American
community and the laws that they are bound to by the state. Eddie Carbone purposefully holds allegiance to the state law that bans illegal immigrants. He is consequently punished by the Red Hook community which accepts and protects immigrants. Marco and Rodolpho, although they want to live in America, break American law by entering the country illegally. Marco has little allegiance to American law or custom, but abides by Sicilian practices of revenge against Eddie. Rodolpho with the possibility of being a citizen offers his apologies to Eddie. Alfieri, the Italian-American lawyer who narrates the play, is the great compromiser between Sicilian law and American laws. He is able to negotiate between social mores in Red Hook and the demands of American citizenship. Though Marco and Rodolpho follow Sicilian law and social custom, Marco follows these laws more strictly than Rodolpho. As a final insult to Eddie, Marco chooses to spit on his face in front of everybody. This is because in Italian culture, that act is considered as an extreme expression of anger toward a person, and it is rarely left without punishment. Marco is a very honourable man and believes in his tradition, and Miller shows us that through a number of symbols. For example, spitting on Eddie’s face is a symbol of disgust and revolt for Eddie’s actions. In addition, at the end of the play, we are told that Marco went to church before going to talk to Eddie. This action tells us that Marco is ready to give up his life and commit a mortal sin to defend his honor, because what Eddie has done, the breaking of the omerta,’ the breaking of trust, is something that in his culture must never be left unpunished. Marco’s actions lead us to discover his violent side which he uses to defend his honour on a number of occasions. For example, to save his brother’s face and his family’s honour, he challenges Eddie to lift the chair, “Can you lift this chair?”(417). Although his brother Rodolpho gets away with it by marrying Catherine, he has no other choice but to go back to his hungry wife and sick
children in Italy. These thoughts make him furious, and at the end of the play Marco kills Eddie and shouts “Animal.” This action shows Marco’s real hatred towards Eddie. This hatred is also due to the fact that he will be going back to Italy empty handed which means that he won’t be able to provide money for his family. This shows Marco is affected by the American Dream.

Marco seeks revenge whereas Rodolpho asks for forgiveness from Eddie and even offers to kiss his hand before marrying his niece. Marco and Rodolpho break laws in order to escape poverty in Italy and provide for their families. Eddie acts solely to protect himself and his virginal prize. Alfieri gives an objective view of the community and the Carbone family. Eddie can be seen as a representative of all men in the sense that we all have different feelings and urges which are not accepted in society, or are frowned upon.

The play abounds in realistic dialogue. In this play most of his characters are uneducated except Alfieri. As the characters are Italian-Americans Miller uses ‘bad’ English and a lot of slang. Eddie uses a naturalistic Brooklyn slang (“quicker” for “more quickly,” “stole” for “stolen” and so on). His speech is simple, but at the start of the play it is more colourful, as he tells Catherine she is “walkin’ wavy” and as he calls her “Madonna.” “He’s taking her for a ride!” another slang term, which means taking advantage of her. Catherine’s speech is more often in grammatically standard forms, but not always. Her meekness is shown in the frequency with which her speeches begin with “Yeah,” agreeing with or qualifying Eddie’s comments. Rodolpho, an immigrant in America speaks in idiosyncratic English, this is seen when he explains why it is important to have a bike in Italy:

Oh, no, the machine, the machine is necessary. A man comes into a great hotel and says, I am a messenger. Who is this man? He
disappears walking, there is no noise, nothing. Maybe he will never come back, maybe he will never deliver the message. But a man who rides up on a great machine, this man is responsible, this man exists. He will be given messages (395).

The image of ‘riding’ is used figuratively and literally. The literal modes of transportation become figurative when Eddie and Beatrice are awaiting Rodolpho and Catherine’s return from a date. The song “Paper Doll” contains significant levels of symbolism. Alfieri speaks with poise and sophistication. The language makes it more real and allows us to sympathise more with the characters and their situations.

The “blood” image can be read on many levels. It is the unifying factor, connecting the individual to his family and his society. For example, the blood relationship is violated by Eddie on different levels: firstly he violates his conjugal relationship with Beatrice, secondly he violates his paternal relation with his niece and thirdly he also violates his immigrant society betraying his relatives to the authorities.40

A realistic effect is brought out with omissions, double negatives, irregular syntax, and other ungrammatical constructions. In act 1, Catherine announces a job offer. Initially Eddie is resentful but later agrees and offers advice:

Eddie: I only ask you one thing – don’t trust nobody. You got a good aunt but she’s got too big a heart, you learned from her.

Believe me (386-87).

For Miller the Brooklyn Bridge is pregnant with meaning. It is a pathway of opportunity to Manhattan and also the linkage between American and Italian cultures. It is a constant reminder of American opportunity and industry. It stretches from ethnic Brooklyn neighbourhoods filled with laborers, foreign-accented immigrants
and the children of those immigrants to the cosmopolitan, urbane Manhattan area settled by New York's original Dutch colonists, now populated by bankers and financiers, and serving as the point of origin for America's connection to an international world. It stretches as well from a Brooklyn of social taboos, of family and clan allegiances imported from the Old Country to Manhattan's city hall and courts, to a social contract in the New World regulated by codified laws and government institutions. Alfieri narrates the story and explains the greater societal and moral implications it has for the community as a whole.

From the bridge, one can see the community below and, like the title of the book, one can see the entire community and seek greater abstract meaning from his viewpoint. Alfieri is symbolic of the person on the bridge looking down upon the Red Hook community or, perhaps, he is the bridge himself allowing the people to cross into Manhattan and modern, intellectual American culture. Alfieri attempts to unite the American laws with Italian cultural practices and negotiate a place in between the two. The play moves "from private to mythic, from Eddie as psychological self to Eddie as participant in universal fate." The play has a political perspective. Yet Miller has depicted his characters' function more intelligibly as fathers, sons, husbands or wives in a family setting than as citizens in a society.

3.3 Plays of 1960s and 1970s

After the Fall - 1964
Incident at Vichy - 1964
The Price - 1968
Rather than writing about Vietnam or civil rights, Miller chose to look back to the Depression in *The Price*, the Holocaust in *After the Fall* and *Incident at Vichy* and, McCarthyism and Depression in *After the Fall*.

The 1970s was a decade of nearly devastating turmoil for the United States. The American incursion into Cambodia, the withdrawal from Vietnam after years of divisive protest at home, South Vietnam’s eventual collapse, Watergate and the resignation of a President under distress – all these historical phenomena shook the very foundation of the United States. Of course none of these plays directly confronts actual issues afflicting 1970s America such as Vietnam and the Watergate. They depict unexpected realms in their search for cures to these immediate contemporary ills. No wonder, they speak to us even today, unencumbered by any dated address to 1970s particulars.

**After the Fall**

When *After the Fall* opened, rage rather than critical evaluation was the reviewers’ response. The play’s dramatic and philosophical worth went virtually unnoticed, while angry reactions focused upon the marriage of the hero – Quentin to a popular sex symbol named Maggie. After the initial furor subsided, it became apparent to the serious viewers and readers that here was a highly complex work original in form and serious in theme.

In *After the Fall* Miller deals with a theme which has been dealt with in his two plays *Incident at Vichy* and *Broken Glass*: “how to make of the outside world a home, a world after a fall from innocence, a world invaded by evil, most manifest in the Holocaust, but evident as well in personal betrayals.” Betrayal played an
enormous role in Miller’s life when many of his friends were victims of the House Un-American Activities Committee.

The play examines the parallels between private and public acts of betrayal by drawing connections between the central character’s self-assessment and the atrocities committed during the Holocaust. In an extended confession, Quentin relates the story of his life describing what he sees as his formative relationships with women, most notably his mother, and his first two wives Louise and Maggie. We also learn of his experiences living through the Depression, House Un-American Activities Committee and of his eventual acceptance of the possibility of future happiness with Holga.

After the Fall centres on the protagonist Quentin. The play shuffles back and forth from scene to scene to recreate experiences in Quentin’s life. Action in act I takes place in the mind, thought and memory of Quentin. Quentin the protagonist is a lawyer and is in his forties. He sifts and weighs evidence from the past before he can proceed to a decision about the future. As perceptively observed by Alice Griffin, “[w]hat drives the action is the quest, the search of the hero. Like a Spenserian Knight, Quentin seeks a virtue – self-knowledge with the help of a guide, Holga, who possesses that virtue.” Quentin examines his two previous marriages for evidence of his responsibility for their failure. He must review these marital episodes because he has formed a third relationship with Holga, an Austrian woman who survived the Second World War and knew its horrors at first hand. Does he have the right, Quentin asks the listener, to become involved with her? An event in Quentin’s childhood surfaces as Quentin laments to listeners:

Quentin: ...I no longer see some final saving grace! Socialism once, then love; some final hope is gone that always saved before the end!(25).
Quentin’s first wife Louise echoes his mother when she says of Quentin who yearns for connections while she insists on separation: “Good God! What an idiot!” In their final argument Maggie too, is charged with calling him “idiot in public.” The accusations connote contempt for lacking reason, yet an idiot child is a central and positive symbol in the play.” Quentin reviews his first marriage to Louise in act I. He ponders:

Quentin: . . . It’s like some unseen web of connexion between people is simply not there. And I always relied on it, somehow; I never quite believed that people could be so easily disposed of (47).

Quentin informs Louise that he was tempted to have an extra marital affair, but did not do so. This is viewed by Louise as a betrayal causing him to feel he is “forever on trial.” In another incident, Quentin reports his wonderment at Maggie’s innocence, “I felt strangely abstract besides her. . . .” Louise misinterprets this incident and says, “You don’t want me. . . .” Louise is portrayed as cold and self-centered. Both Quentin and Louise may have been in love when they married, but now what Quentin recalls is the death of love. Louise reappears from time to time insisting “I’m not all uninteresting,” and the truth is that she is uninteresting. The first act ends with a divorce.

In the play, betrayal is political as well as personal. Quentin’s memory connects McCarthyism and the Holocaust to domestic betrayal. For instance, Quentin refers to his mother’s betrayal by her father when she was forced to marry rather than further her education. Quentin’s father was betrayed by his mother when she insisted that he stop his education in order to work. So husbands betray wives and wives in turn betray their husbands. Betrayal has a political dimension too. There are some scenes with Lou, an ex-Communist professor of law and Mickey, his friend who
decides to denounce him to the committee. Mickey testifies against Lou, Quentin’s gentle scholarly mentor, who ultimately commits suicide. Mickey seems to be modelled on Kazan, Miller’s friend. Elia Kazan directed many of the great plays of the period including *After the Fall*. He “named names” of those who were fellow members of a Communist cell. Kazan’s autobiography gives an interesting clue to this behaviour in an account of his family background in Anatolia. Kazan’s relatives used to don the fez worn by their Turkish conquerors when they went out of doors. It is impossible to escape the parallels in this family history of fear and a compulsion to belong to the dominant culture.

In act II Quentin reviews his second marriage to Maggie. Maggie is persecuted with insight and understanding. The Maggie episodes form the focal point in the main text. They develop emotionally rather than chronologically. They add to the play’s intellectual appeal. Maggie “was chewed and spat out by a long line of grinning men! Her name floating in the stench of locker-rooms and parlor-car cigar smoke!”(89). Maggie resembles in all details Marilyn Monroe. However, Miller insists on a broader view for the play:

The character of Maggie . . . is not in fact Marilyn Monroe. Maggie is a character in a play about the human animal’s unwillingness or inability to discover in her the seeds of her own destruction . . . . She most perfectly exemplifies the self-destructiveness which finally comes when one views oneself as pure victim. And she . . . exemplifies this view because she comes so close to being a pure victim—of parents, of a puritanical sexual code and of her exploitation as enemies.46
Almost four years after Quentin’s first encounter with Maggie, then a receptionist, she becomes a famous singer. She attributes her changed life to him. Maggie is afraid and is haunted by her mother. Her mother was promiscuous in her behaviour and puritanical in her outlook: “...my mother – she used to get dressed in the closet. She was very – like immoral, you know?” (81). Maggie assures Quentin:

Maggie: I ... don’t really sleep around with everybody. Quentin! I was with a lot of men but I never got anything for it. It was like charity, see. My analyst said I gave to those in need (87).

When she reports that her agent advised her to make him her beneficiary, Quentin explodes, “[i]t’s not the money they take, it’s the dignity they destroy” (90).

After the marriage, Maggie tries to antagonize Quentin by her temperamental outbursts and vulgar language in order to see herself as a victim. In the last scene she even tries to make him take the bottle of sleeping pills so that she can wrest it from him, thus making him her killer. Quentin realizes her plan. Quentin says, “so you’re not my victim anymore” (113). Maggie has attempted suicide twice, and twice he has saved her. When Quentin informs her that their relationship has been strained because they “used one another!” Maggie clings to denial. “Not me, not me!” (113). Though Maggie swallows a handful of pills she survives this encounter but dies a few months later.

As the play moves on dramatic action picks up blossoming in act II. We first see Quentin reminiscing about an old girlfriend, Felice who had her nose fixed in order to impress Quentin. The figures of Felice, a dancer and Elise, Lou’s wife flits in and out of Quentin’s thoughts. Felice idolizes Quentin, she insists on ‘blessing’ him, but Quentin hesitates. Both Felice and Maggie attribute to Quentin a power that changed their lives.
Quentin had handled successfully Felice's divorce case. Elise, Lou's wife is a tempter. She appears naked and inviting before Quentin (who declines the invitation), betraying her husband, Lou Quentin's friend and client. She tempts Louise with knowledge; through the psychoanalysis Elsie encourages Louise's resentment against Quentin that leads to their divorce.

Then we jump to Germany where we visit the stoic Holga who takes Quentin to see the remnants of a concentration camp. Quentin feels uneasy for never committing to her. His mother and father pop up in scene after scene to reveal Quentin's roots as well as the catastrophe of the father losing all the family's money in bad investment decisions.

Holga, an Austrian archaeologist whom Quentin has befriended in Germany, is a symbol of hope. Holga carries the burden of the theme. She already has attained the self-knowledge Quentin seeks. Holga teaches him the necessary lesson that guilt, loss and betrayal are not punishments to be avoided but inevitable signs of the human conditions. She assures Quentin's feelings of guilt about the Holocaust by assuring him that "no one they did not kill can be innocent again." Miller suggests that "the basic thrust of the play is that the enemy is innocent . . . . Until you can give up your innocence, you are very open to crime, to becoming part of the crime." The play reaches its conclusion as Quentin approaching the tower, realizes:

Quentin: . . . Who can be innocent again on this mountain of skulls? I tell you what I know! My brothers died here [he looks from the tower down at the fallen Maggie] but my brothers built this place . . . . And what's the cure? . . . No, not love; I loved them all, all! And gave them willing to failure and to death that I
might live, as they gave me and gave each other, with a word, a
look, a trick, a truth, a lie — and all in love! (119)

Quentin realizes that Holga “hopes, because she knows.”

In this play Miller’s technique is expressionistic. Scenes follow one another not chronologically but instead by association, one thought leading to another. Quentin, the protagonist is in his forties. At the opening of the play, he separates from the others, advances to the front of the stage, and addresses an unseen “Listener,” who “would be sitting just beyond the edge of the stage itself.” Miller says that “The ‘Listener,’ who, to some will be a psychoanalyst, to other, God, is Quentin himself turned at the edge of the abyss to look at his experience, his nature and his time.”

During the actions Quentin may be speaking directly to the Listener or participating in one of the episodes or commenting on and interpreting ongoing action. Miller keeps the Louise incident brief, interspersing Quentin’s childhood memories and professional association with friends Lou and Mickey.

The setting consists of three levels rising to the highest at the back, crossing in a curve from one side of the stage to another. Rising above it, and dominating the stage is the blasted stone tower of a German concentration camp.

Language of After the Fall is poetic. Miller uses dramatically the free associations that modern poetry uses. Quentin’s mounting ‘awareness,’ approaching ‘agony’ is expressed in increasingly poetic dialogue. In the second act, as Maggie’s speech changes from childlike questions that invoke protection to bitter and cynical invective, Quentin’s dialogue grows more varied in length and structure, more lyric in diction.

The image of the concentration camp pervades the play, and Quentin sees it not only as a metaphor for the Holocaust, but also for McCarthyism, and for his own
guilt about betraying others who depend on him. When asked why he chose to use a concentration camp in *After the Fall*, Miller explained:

> I have always felt that concentration camps, though they’re a phenomenon of totalitarian states, are also the logical conclusion of contemporary life . . . In this play the question is, what is there between people that is indestructible? The concentration camp is the final expression of human separateness and its ultimate consequence. It is organized abandonment.  

Quentin struggles to understand why his own personal acts of betrayal and cruelty are linked in his mind with the horrors that occurred at Auschwitz and other concentration camps. He ultimately accepts his culpability in the horrors he detests because he realizes that no one is innocent ‘after the fall.’ Miller seeks to turn a Strindbergesque tale of martial failure and self-destruction into a Universal play about individual responsibility.

**Incident at Vichy**

This play is Arthur Miller’s reaction to a visit in France where he came to know about the conditions during the Second World War and where the Nazi-friendly part of France collaborated in rounding up Jews in order to send them to hardships and death in concentration camps in Germany. While travelling in Europe, Arthur Miller attended the Nazi murder trials in Frankfurt. His immediate reaction to the trials was to write an impassioned article attempting, in his words, to “reinstate an understanding in the public mind of the dynamics of fascism.” His thoughts then turned to writing the play *Incident at Vichy*. Miller wrote *Incident at Vichy* in
1964. It is set in Nazi-occupied France. The play is based upon the premise that all Jews, foreign or French, were equally at risk for deportation to Auschwitz in 1942. Throughout 1942, 1943 and up until April of 1944, however, Jews with French citizenship who were not Communists and who did not join or associate with the Resistance were, in almost all instances, protected from deportation by the Vichy authorities. The French sacrificed stateless foreign Jews to the Nazis in order to protect their own citizens.

Miller's play about Vichy France in 1942 bears little relation to the historical model. The events represented in the drama never occurred, and never could have occurred. The only Jew at risk in the play, from a historical perspective, would have been the bearded Hasid because presumably he was not a French citizen. All the others and particularly the protagonist Leduc—a war veteran—would have been protected by Vichy/Nazi agreements. These agreements remained in force until fourteenth April 1944 at which time the Nazis demanded that all Jews, regardless of nationality, be delivered for shipment to the east. At this point, however, the situation in France was disintegrating, with the Resistance gaining strength and the Vichy regime crumbling. A situation quite different from that is suggested in Miller's play.

The psychoanalyst, who Miller knew, had been picked up in Vichy, France with false papers during the War and saved by a man he had never seen before. This unknown gentle soul had substituted himself in a line of suspects waiting to have their papers and penises inspected in a hunt for Jews. The second historical root to the play lay closer to home. Prince Josef Von Schwarzenberg Senior, surviving member of an ancient Austrian noble line, and a close friend of Miller's wife Inge Morath, had "declined" to cooperate with the Nazis and suffered for it during the War. He became the source for Von Berg, the Prince in Vichy who steps in to take the place of a
condemned man. Miller was fascinated by Josef Von Schwarzenberg because he embodied a self-sacrificing moral integrity in the face of fascism.55

The action of the play occurs in the highly charged atmosphere of the prisoner’s waiting area. The arrests include one French gentile, six French Jews, a gypsy, a bearded Jew from Eastern Europe and an Austrian nobleman. The dramatic tension increases in the holding area as the prisoners are processed. Terror creeps upon the Jews as the depression of their shared plight becomes apparent. The suspects are summoned one by one into an unseen inner room where the Police Captain reigns assisted by two detectives and a ‘professor’ of racial anthropology. Some of the suspects will be released and depart, pass in hand, through the waiting area past the single guard. Others will not be seen again. The hopes and fears of the detainees are revealed, and the dramatic tension builds as each is called in until only the doctor and the Prince are left.

Von Berg is a Catholic Austrian prince. He isn’t aware about the reality of the War or the desperation of the times. He is drawn into the War when he is personally affected, that is when his Jew musicians were murdered by the Nazis. His cousin Baron Kessler is involved in all these killings. In spite of knowing about his cousin’s doings, he doesn’t do anything constructive except think of suicide. He is one of the detainees caught by mistake. He is the first person in the play to use the word ‘Jewish’ and also the first to speak the truth about the arrests. He denies Leduc’s accusation that he has “a dislike if not a hatred for the Jews.” He also denies having anything to do with these monstrous killings. Being an aristocrat, he is bound to be set free. Towards the end of the play, there is a growing awareness within him of his responsibilities not only as an aristocrat and a gentile but also as a “human being for the atrocities in Europe.” The dramatic climax of the piece occurs when Von Berg
performs a tragic act of self-sacrifice. He gives his pass to freedom to Leduc the
psychiatrist and a French Jew who otherwise will be sent to Auschwitz. He not only
gives up his pass but also his life. Through his actions towards the end of the play, he
demonstrates that "one must assume responsibility."

Leduc takes the pass from the Austrian Prince and escapes with the knowledge
that he has to be socially responsible for his actions in the future. If it wasn't for his
mother, he would have been in America before the German invasion. His mother
couldn't leave her things behind and migrate to America, "She had this brass bed,
carpets and draperies and all kinds of junk" which she refused to leave. He too like
Von Berg is one of the detainees. Unlike the other detainees, he is quite rational. He
urges others to join him in subduing the single guard. Leduc fathoms that the enemy is
relying on them "to project our own reasonable ideas into heads. It is reasonable that a
light guard means the thing is not important. They rely on our logic to immobilize
ourselves." Only Leduc sees the situation as universal. In the play's canvas of isolated
debates, the concluding scene is especially forensic. It becomes a seminar on
responsibility. Von Berg tells Leduc that he would like to be able to leave for which
Leduc responds:

It is not you that I am angry with. In one part of my mind it is not even
this Nazi. I am only angry that I should have been born before the day
when man has accepted his own nature; that he is not reasonable, that
he is full of murder, that his ideals are only the little tax he pays for the
right to hate and kill with a clear conscience.(48)

He believes that all gentiles nurse a dislike or hatred for the Jews; and Von
Berg is no exception. Leduc tells him "... [p]art of knowing who we are is knowing
we are not someone else." Leduc's final speeches cause Von Berg to act positively
and the play achieves its intellectual and emotional climax. He holds Von Berg partly responsible for Berg's cousin, Baron who is involved in these activities. In his conversation with Berg he tells him that he wants his "responsibility – that might have helped . . ." The play is set in Vichy in the waiting room of "a place of detention" in 1942; ten men seated in a row await questioning by the authorities. In charge of the inquiry is a young Nazi major on injury leave from battle, the other authorities being French. Inspite of his unwillingness, he has been ordered to head the investigation. He seeks respite in alcohol. He is intelligent enough to understand the absurdity of what is happening and decent enough to feel deeply embarrassed about it. He cannot save the prisoners.

The play has limitations because only Leduc and Von Berg evolve as characters. They are dynamic, fluid and undetermined beings "caught in a trap." We know nothing about them, aside from their professions until they reveal themselves through their choices which often prove to be surprising. Miller states: "The characters in the play are flesh and blood people each with a subterranean life of his own, but they are also symbolic in the bearing they have in ourselves and our time."56

The occupation, appearance, behaviour and outlook of each of the suspects individualize the characters and engage the sympathy as well as the suspense of the audience even though Miller notes that "the characters were functions of the society."57 He created an artificial scenario in the play that manipulated the historical record to support the universalistic interpretation of the Holocaust.

Its linear dramatic structure, however, is strikingly different from the free-flowing stream of consciousness style of his other Holocaust play After the Fall. In this play, metaphors of food and drink are used for political survival. In the very first scene, the importance of food and drink is established. This metaphor also refers to
“hunger for survival, morality, justice and decency in a world which has lost its humanity.” The food metaphor is also used to explain adulation of Hitler:

Von Berg: But they adore him! My own cook, my gardeners, the people who work in my forests . . . . They adore him, the salt of the earth . . . starting. Adore him (34).

“The salt of the earth” image brings out the conflict between Germans and Jews. The word ‘salt’ also has Judeo-Christian connections. It was used by the Jews “as an emblem of purity and sanctifying influence.” This imagery has also been used ironically to convey how “Hitler wanted to purify and sanctify the German race.” The word ‘hunger’ is used figuratively. Here it refers to “the desire for religious and racial tolerance, the yearning for freedom, the craving for life – all of which the Nazis threaten to deny the men on the bench just because they are Jews.”

Miller creates a drama between very different people, with a simple set, who have been taken by the police and are now waiting to be questioned, one by one. Nine men and a boy suspected as Jews are detained for a purpose unknown to them. Among them are a painter, an electrician, a businessman, an actor and two elegant and literate men; the Viennese aristocrat named Prince Von Borg and Leduc, a French psychoanalyst. These men consider their personal and universal responsibility as they face their ultimate challenge. Do they believe what they see? And will they escape persecution or are they doomed? These questions torment the mind of each of them and, their ethics are being thoroughly tested. As observed by Janet Balakian “Incident at Vichy embodies Miller’s most critical and analytic response to Fascism and to the Holocaust.”
The Price

The Price\textsuperscript{61} is based on The Great Crash which transformed America. In the words of Arthur Miller, "The Price grew out of the need to confirm the power of the past, the seedbed of current reality, and the way to possibly reaffirm cause and effect in an insane world."\textsuperscript{62} As in other Miller's plays, the sources of this play are obvious. Arthur Miller narrates the events of the play in the following words:

The Great Crash of 1929 left Victor and Walter to care for their widowed father who had been ruined in the stock market collapse and was helpless to cope with life. While Victor, loyal to the father, dropped out of college, to earn a living for them both, ended up on the police force, Walter went on to become a wealthy surgeon. The conflict of how to divide the proceeds, cuts open the long-buried lives of both men, as well as that of Victor's wife, Esther, and reveals the choices each has made and the price each has paid. Though it all weaves the antic 90-year-old furniture dealer Gregory Solomon, who is yards ahead of them as he tries to shepherd them away from the abyss towards which he knows they are heading.\textsuperscript{63}

The conflict between father and sons, a recurrent Miller theme, is seen in The Price from the view point of the sons. The action in the play is deceptively simple. Action in act I begins with police sergeant Victor Franz in uniform entering the attic of a Manhattan brownstone soon to be torn down. Victor meets Solomon an antique dealer with a Russian Yiddish accent. Solomon personifies the theme of the play on the realistic level he examines, evaluates and offers a price for the actual furniture of
the Franz household. Walter is not trusted by Victor because of his behaviour twenty-eight years ago. Victor refers to the furniture, “[i]t was very good stuff.”

Solomon reminds him that values change with the times. Solomon is reluctant to buy, delaying his offer of a price for such a large quantity of furniture that to sell might take more years than are left to him. Even while delaying, he is carefully examining the furniture. That shows his expertise. He pretends to leave at one point when Victor loses his patience, “[n]o – I don’t need it.” He reminds Victor, “[a]nd don’t forget it – I never give you a price”(34). When Victor is about to dismiss him, Solomon says, “I’m going to buy it! I mean I’ll . . . I’ll have to live, that’s all, I’ll make up my mind! I’ll buy it”(39). With his zest for life, Solomon is the opposite of the elder Franz, who after the crash was confined to the armchair. Like the furniture, Solomon was strong in his day. He left Russia at the age of twenty-four.

Solomon: I was a horse them days . . . nothing ever stopped me. Only life(33).

Solomon and Victor negotiate a price for the furniture as the house of his dead parents is about to be demolished.

Victor sacrificed his college degree and the hope of a professional career to support his father who was depressed since he failed in business due to the market crash of 1929. Victor joined the job of civil servant struck by his father’s failure; now nearing the age of fifty, he is undecided about retiring from the police force. Before the arrival of Walter, we notice tension and also affection between Victor and his wife Esther. Esther says that Victor owed a ‘moral debt’ for shouldering the burden of his father. Moreover, he allowed Walter to attend medical school. Now, Walter has attained fame and wealth. Assuming that the money paid for the furniture should go to Victor, she is there to see that he gets a good price:
Esther: We can never keep our minds on money! We worry about it, we talk about it, but we can't seem to want it. I do, but you don't. I really do, Vic. I want it. Vic? I want money!(21).

Her outburst is understandable. To her, the money to be paid for the furniture represents all the small comforts they could never afford. Esther plays an important role in the play. As Alan Downer notes, Esther is "the tritagonist; because of her, the play remains a drama and never descends to debate." Although she and Victor often disagree, there is understanding between them in contrast to Walter and his ex-wife. Ashamed to be seen in public with him in uniform, Esther leaves to collect his civilian jacket. At the end of the first act, just as Victor has accepted the price and is receiving money from Solomon, Walter appears. In act I, we see Walter through Victor's eyes until Walter arrives with a different interpretation of past events.

Action in act II reveals that Walter is equally unhappy. He is in his mid-fifties. Though successful in career, he seldom sees the children of his broken marriage. He bears the added burden of guilt for deserting his father to pursue a career. He informs Solomon that Victor too should have thought of himself and attended college since their seemingly helpless father actually had thousands. In act II amid the recriminations and accusations Victor portrays himself as the loyal son and Walter as being selfish for refusing his brother's request for a college tuition loan. Walter however, sees Victor as a dupe and regards himself as a realist.

The revelation in act II builds dramatic tension. It reveals more fully the characters of the brothers. This is a favourite theme of Miller – truth versus illusions. After the elder Franz's success ended in disaster, Walter was motivated even more strongly to succeed but this led to his breakdown. Walter tries to explain to Victor and Esther how he has changed after starting out "wanting to be the best."
Having had to face some painful truths about his own life, Walter has succeeded in evoking a confession from Victor even though he only ‘partly’ admits it. Walter reveals that he telephoned their father to offer to pay the tuition fee (a message never delivered), insisting that his brother should not join the police force and work his ‘fine mind.’ The father’s reply was “Victor wants to help me. I can’t stop him”(79). Walter’s final revelation is even more painful to Victor. All the time Victor had been supporting their father who had nearly four thousand dollars. He had asked Walter to invest that sum for him believing that “sooner or later” Victor would desert him. Victor claims he had no choice but to remain with their father. Walter then points to the harp, “even then it was worth a couple of hundred, may be more! Your degree was right there”(86). Victor says, “The man was a beaten dog . . . how do you demand his last buck?” Esther gets angry when she comes to know that Victor’s father had the money but he let Victor look after him while she and Victor “put off having children” and lived “like mice.” At the end, it is Esther who speaks a requiem for their lost opportunities. That Walter does feel responsible for his brother’s lost opportunities is evident in his offer of an administrative post to Victor in his hospital. Victor’s response is an angry one:

Victor: There’s a price people pay. I’ve paid it, it’s all gone, I haven’t got it anymore. Just like you paid, didn’t you? You’ve got no wife, you’ve lost your family, you’re rattling around all over the place?(81).

Although for thirty years he strove to prevent the kind of catastrophe his father suffered, Walter has learned a painful truth, “...I only got out alive when I saw that there was no catastrophe, there had never had been”(90). He feels that if Victor could recognize his past self-delusion they could meet without recrimination. But
they cannot meet and their accusations mount to a climax. Victor tries to force Walter to confess. Walter flings their mother's gown at Victor and says, "you will never, never again make me ashamed!" His wild behaviour alarms Victor:

Victor: Maybe he oughtn't go into the street like that -


In the place of the father in whose chair he has been sitting Solomon offers Victor the wisest course of action. In the encounter each revaluates earlier family crises, blames the other and defends himself refusing to accept responsibility for the past actions and present outcomes. After they have relived the past crises, denied personal responsibilities and defended their earlier decisions there is some hope that the brothers might at last resolve their differences.

Typical of Miller’s artistry, every element of the play has its purpose: the structure, language and symbolism effectively support characterization and theme. Not a word is wasted; as Gerald Weales notes, “talk is both tool and subject.” In the first act, interest is aroused immediately by the unusual sight at curtain rise which reveals furniture piled high. Suspense is built by situations like waiting for the offer of a price, tension between Esther and Victor and the arrival of Walter which shatters the consummation of a deal.

The conflict between Walter and Victor approaches a climax as act II progresses. Now, each successive speech reveals more of the past and upsets present assumptions. Finally, Miller eschews a pat ending; the brothers are unable to put the past behind them and to resume their boyhood friendship and trust.

The single set of a Manhattan brownstone attic with accumulations of old furniture is symbolic of Miller himself, rummaging through his own personal wares
and re-echoing the father obsession that runs through *Death of a Salesman* and *All My Sons*. The setting offers visual proof of the family's lost wealth. Heavy, solid furniture, expensive in its day is piled up in the attic room to which Victor and his father retreated.

As with the best plays of Tennessee Williams, the sheer eloquence of the language seen in *The Price* adds new dimension to the play. The dialogue between the two brothers during the encounter in act I seems convincingly realistic and the time of the action is actual and continuous.

In *The Price* the speech of Esther, Victor and Walter is sharp and precise; it sounds realistic but actually is heightened. The language Miller invents for Solomon, however, is distinctively his and like that of no other character in the canon. With Russian-Yiddish idiom as its basis, his dialogue is in turn humorous, aphoristic and ironic while at the same time, it reveals a personality as original as his mode of expression. It is as if Miller were bringing on an Old Testament prophet in the guise of a Yiddish Vaudeville acrobat, Solomon's former profession. His lively observations are made memorable by their idiomatic flavor which Miller achieves through displaced syntax, nonsequiturs and unlikely metaphors. Verb tenses are random like "I never dealed with a policeman." Adjectives and adverbs are reversed; metaphors are outlandish: "Anything Spanish Jacobean you'll sell quicker a case of tuberculosis."

Many images are drawn from the household. Urging Victor to reach a decision on retirement Esther says, "It's like pushing against a door for twenty-five years and suddenly it opens . . . and we stand there"(20). Often both past and present seem dreamlike. Recalling his past, Solomon tells Victor: "I pulled, I struggled in six different countries . . . It's like now I'm sitting here talking to you and I tell you it's a
dream, it’s a dream!” (43). Paying the price for past actions is referred to by both brothers being reminders of the wider implications of the play’s theme. As Neil Carson observes, “there is no external arbiter of moral values. Each man must set his own price on his actions and then learn to accept his evaluation.” 66

The furniture and objects symbolize the past and the brothers’ clothing the present. Victor in his uniform implies law and order; a person wearing it might well sacrifice his life for another, as Victor has done. Walter’s camel hair coat and general air of well-being imply success and evoke respect. While the armchair center stage (in which Solomon seats himself) represents the fallen father who confined himself therein, the harp recalls the mother. Both acts end with Solomon counting out the money the price paid for the furniture, into Victor’s hand, symbolizing that the present pays a price for the past. In the final analysis, The Price is a somber and depressing slice of life concretizing a chunk of contemporary social reality.

3.4 Plays of 1980s and 1990s

The American Clock - 1980

The Last Yankee - 1993

Broken Glass - 1994

In the 1980s Miller, the man who had challenged the House Un-American Activities Committee Investigations in the McCarthy era and been outspoken in his support of social causes remained an active and consistent voice for human rights and freedom of speech. The American Clock was one of the significant plays written by
him in the 1980s. It describes the typical American scene. The two other significant plays of this period are The Last Yankee (1993) and Broken Glass (1994).

The Depression which haunts Miller’s other plays is very much evident in The American Clock, The Last Yankee and Broken Glass. The American Clock is described by Miller as a ‘mural’ of American society in the Depression crisis. Broken Glass is also very much based on the Holocaust. In the words of Miller, “I’ve probably been influenced in selecting the theme by the recrudescence of anti-Semitism in this world which is something that I wouldn’t have believed.”

The American Clock

This is the second play of Miller about the Depression. The American Clock has been described by Miller “as a ‘mural’ of American society in the Depression crisis.” It focuses on a single-family unit with the playwright’s larger social concerns.

Unlike Arthur Miller’s earlier plays, The American Clock creates a collage of bits and pieces of the lives of some forty Depression era characters ranging from shoeshine boys to farmers and Wall Street financiers. The play is about survival during the Great Depression and the Depression’s devastating effect on Americans everywhere.

“The crash” observes Miller, “forced us all to enter history willy-nilly, and everyone soon understood that there were other ways of conducting the nation’s business; there simply had to be, because the one we had was so persistently not working. It was not only the radicals who were looking at the historical clock and asking how long our system could last, but people of every viewpoint.” In his
autobiography *Timebends* Miller observes of *The American Clock*, “I wanted to set us in our history by revealing a line to measure from. In *Clock* it was the objective facts of social collapse.”

Like *After the Fall* the play relies heavily on autobiographical material. Set in the Depression when Miller’s father lost his considerable financial resources *The American Clock* flips through the mental album of a man whose family life still obsesses him. The play is in two acts.

Though there are several characters in the play, the play’s story centers around the Baum family. Moe Baum loses his manufacturing business and his money in the crash. He along with his wife Rose and son Lee, leave their luxurious apartment and go to live in a small house in Brooklyn. Some of the other characters are: Theodore K. Quinn, the President of General Electric, Arthur Robertson, a financier and narrator in the play and Clarence, a shoe shiner.

The play is set in the 1920s and 1930s America. The story of the Baum family is interspersed into Miller’s larger social canvas. The play is set at the beginning of the Depression after the 1929 stock market crash. When the stock market crashes, the well-to-do Baum family loses everything. Rose Baum is modelled after Miller’s own mother. Rose loves music. She declares, “this piano is not leaving this house. Jewelry, yes, but nobody hacks this dear, darling piano.” She loves playing Schumann and Gershwin. She is also a voracious reader, “… I must go to the library – I must start taking out some good books again”(405).

In the opening scene of act II, she is seen ‘dressed for an evening out.’ In her next appearance she is pawning jewelry. Soon the family moves to Brooklyn. She is making the best of the move to a small house. The Baums are forced to move from their plush penthouse apartment to the less-attractive Brooklyn digs of Mrs. Baum’s
sister. She accompanies herself on that piano to tunes that remind her of better days when life was filled with Broadway shows before Brooklyn seemed to "drift finally into the Atlantic" and Manhattan became a "foreign country." It is Rose's improvisational strength that keeps the family going during the family tribulations. Her humour helps the rest of the family to endure the adversity. She is sensitive and perceptive to her surroundings. Miller paints his picture of life in the Depression through her. She describes the situation at the time, "... there's a dozen college graduates with advanced degrees playing ball in the street like children ..."(398).

She is warm hearted and feeds the homeless, even lets one move in with them. As pointed out by Alice Griffin "even Rose, with her warm heartedness, her optimism, and her humor, [is] eventually worn down by the unrelenting hard times." At the end of act I she speaks confidently, "[t]his is going to be a good day – I know it"(402). She asserts: "and listen – it does not mean you can never go to college"(403). Rose sells ladies lingerie on commission of a tenth of a cent on each item. Her good humour in the face of adversity gives the family strength to endure. She recognizes the incongruity between their aspirations and the reality that threatens them. Later, she is playing cards and awaiting the arrival of the evictor. She nearly freezes with fear as the knocking at the door continues. Lee's epitaph aptly describes her character:

After all these years I still can't settle with myself about my mother.

In her own crazy way she was so much like the country ... There was nothing she believed that she didn't also believe the opposite ... Or she'd lament her fate as a woman ... But then she'd warn me, "Watch out for women – when they're not stupid, they're full of deceit." I'd come home and give her a real bath of radical idealism, and she was ready to storm the barricades; by evening she'd fallen in love again
with the Prince of Wales. She was so like the country... With all her
defeats she believed to the end that the world was meant to be better...
I don’t know; all I know for sure is that whenever I think of her, I
always end up — with this heedful of life!(444-45).

When her husband returns home penniless she weeps and yells at him, “[t]hen
 go to your mother and stand up like a man to her... instead of this goddamned
 fool!”(441). When her relatives suggest that Moe should ask his wealthy mother for
 help Rose bitterly replies, “[h]is mother says there’s a Depression going on. Meantime
 you can go blind from the diamonds on her fingers. Which he gave her!”(432). Moe
 Baum, Rose’s husband loses his manufacturing business and his money in the crash.
He fires his chauffeur Frank. He then becomes a salesman. He borrows a quarter from
Lee. Moe was once a successful businessman; now he no longer has any business to
conduct. He clings desperately to his crumbling dignity even when he borrows
subway fare from his son. Sometimes he returns home penniless. He doesn’t borrow
from his rich mother. Sometimes he goes home “nearly beaten” after selling nothing.

Lee, Moe’s son, shares the story telling with Robertson. He had twelve dollars
in the bank which he withdrew just before the crash. He was disillusioned because he
bought a bike with those twelve dollars only to have it stolen. He is the survivor who
hardens himself to live through the hopeless present. Lee catches his mother’s
optimism, “[o]h, I do not mind, Ma” adding, “I am lucky I got the job!”(403). He
staged a drama with his father for the Welfare Office so that he could get a job. He is
the only wage earner apart from his father who sells lingerie. When his father borrows
a quarter from him, he addresses the audience:

... it was hard to look at one another. So we pretended that nothing
had happened... But something had... It was like I’d started to
support my father! And why that should have made me feel so happy,
I don't know, but it did!(404)

He yearns for "the dream to come back from wherever it had gone to hide."
He changes many jobs, saves money for his education and manages to enter college.
He becomes a sports reporter.

As the desperation builds, Lee Baum and his father pretend to be estranged so that Lee can qualify for government assistance and a job with the WPA Writers Project. Arthur A. Robertson shares the story-telling with Lee. A financer by profession he had anticipated the crash. He outwitted the banks and carried his money in his shoes. He witnesses a farm auction which turns riotous and comments: "Nobody knows how many people are leaving their hometowns, their farms and cities, and hitting the road. Hundreds of thousands, maybe millions of internal refugees, Americans transformed into strangers" (386).

Interwoven with their story are dozens of vignettes depicting the political and social turmoil of those years: a stockbroker faces ruin, a farmer struggles to save his land from the auction block and a prostitute discovers the economic theories of Friedrich Engels. The American Clock is a lively and unsentimental portrait of a nation struggling to survive without a safety net. The play initially depicts a rich and comfortable country kneeling "to a golden calf in a blanket of red, white and blue."

The short sketches form a panorama depicting every level of society. These sketches are based on Studs Torkel's Hard Times, a 1970 book of interviews with survivors of the Depression. Some of the characters, and many who are alluded to, are from real life. According to Miller, it is 'a Vaudeville' with dramatic scenes set in the towns and form lands of America and period songs sung by a chorus to an on stage
jazz band. The dramatic sketches are brief and are interspersed with song and dance numbers.

The setting is the whole country of America. Open space could be the sky, clouds etc. A small jazz band onstage plays “Million Dollar Baby” as a baseball pitcher enters, tossing a ball from hand to glove. The band remains onstage throughout the play. Jack Kroll observes in his *Newsweek* review, “The American Clock never finds an effective dramatic shape; it’s part play, part chronicle, but mostly it’s Miller’s last evocation of the images and people that have haunted him more than any others in his life.” 73

In *The American Clock*, “the world is shattered by the Great Depression,” yet the American people seem to “await a return to prosperity without evaluating the roots of its insubstantiality.”74

**The Last Yankee**

*The Last Yankee*75 is one of the plays written by Arthur Miller in the first half of the decade of 1990s. It deals with marriage as a central situation with implications that touch upon politics and society.

The plot of *The Last Yankee* is simple. Two husbands meet in the waiting room of a State mental hospital and discuss their wives who are suffering from depression. In the second scene the wives – Patricia Hamilton and Karen Frick – speak of their recent and past lives. The husbands enter and the four interact; the Fricks are still in conflict while the Hamiltons struggle toward an understanding and, being optimistic leave for home.
The play consists of two scenes. In scene I, we see the two men Leroy Hamilton and John Frick meet for the first time in the waiting room of the depressives’ ward of a State institution. Leroy Hamilton is seated on one of the half-dozen chairs, leafing through an old magazine. Mr. Frick enters who is sixty, solid in a business suit. He carries a small valise. Both of them are waiting to meet their respective wives. The two men struggle to communicate. From their conversation we realize that Leroy Hamilton’s wife Patricia has been in and out of institutions for many years. Patricia is forty-four. She is ‘a pretty winsome woman’ and the daughter of Swedish immigrant parents.

John Frick, a can-do, self-made businessman deals with oil, lumber and automobiles. He is devoid of emotional insight. He judges people by their occupation, appearance and connections. In the first scene, Frick is surprised to learn that he is conversing with a carpenter because Leroy looks “like a college man.” He connects him with Alexander Hamilton because of a newspaper article. He is surprised to learn that Leroy is not acquainted with other descendents.

Frick: Probably some of them must be pretty big. – Never even looked them up?(457).

Frick lays too much emphasis on material things and equates success in life with wealth. He is married to the spiritually deflated Karen. He struggles to understand his wife. His marriage disintegrates as he carries marketplace values home. He complains that he cannot understand women:

Frick: It’s a mystery – a woman with everything she could possibly want. I don’t care what happens to the country, there’s nothing could ever hurt her anymore. Suddenly, out of nowhere, she’s terrified! . . . (452).
Leroy Hamilton is a descendant of one of America’s founding fathers, Alexander Hamilton. Leroy’s connection to Hamilton sets him up as a quintessential “American” formed and informed by the ideals of the Constitution. He follows the founding fathers’ beliefs in independence, tolerance and hard work. He struggles to support seven children on his wages as a carpenter. He is in his forties and he is self-reliant. Unlike Frick, Leroy is proud of being a carpenter. While arguing with Frick he defends his occupation:

Leroy: . . . Should I be ashamed I’m a carpenter? I mean everybody’s talking “labor, labor,” how much labor’s getting; well if it’s so great to be labor how come nobody wants to be it? (458).

The second scene introduces us to Patricia Hamilton and Karen Frick. Both women are patients at a mental institution. Patricia has been in and out of institutions for many years while Karen has not long been institutionalized. Patricia is the daughter of Swedish immigrant parents who believed in the inevitability and necessity of success. One of her brothers wins the All New England Golf Tournament and the other wins a silver medal in the Olympic Games for pole vault. However, it falls short of what they expect. Her brothers commit suicide. Her father was against her marrying Leroy, a Yankee. Patricia’s father had told Leroy before the wedding “No Yankee will ever be good enough for a Swedish girl”(475). They were attracted to each other. Patricia confides in Karen, “we were the handsomest pair in town.” She shares both John Frick’s marketplace values and his failure to appreciate the marriage partner as a “treasured” individual. She complains about Leroy to Karen:

Patricia: . . . he’s absolutely refused to make any money, every one of our children has had to work since they could practically write their names (463).
She accuses her husband of lacking necessary qualities required to survive in a competitive world. She finally realizes, "I have to stop blaming him." Patricia is the main locus of hope resolutely weaning herself off medication because "the soul belongs to God, we're not supposed to be stuffing Valium into His mouth"(462). Patricia takes the time and effort to befriend Karen Frick and finally achieves a puzzled but committed resolution with her husband Leroy. The keynote of her life is disappointment, a word which echoes in the text and which becomes a symptom for an explanation of the depression from which she and so many others suffer.76

Patricia and Karen have become friendly during their time together in the ward, and scene two sees the four characters brought together inside where a picture emerges of a society whose members feel obscurely cheated. Karen Frick who is in her sixties is very thin with wispy hair. Unlike her husband, she wants immaterial things. Patricia tells Frick, "She's got to feel treasured, you see." Karen is fearful of arising during the night, in case she disturbs Frick's sleep. Although she hates dead animals and "the sight of catfish makes [her] want to vomit"(465), she accompanies Frick on hunting trips. She may be paralyzed by such decisions as where to do her grocery shopping, but her new interest in tap dancing is a beacon of pure joy. Her husband scorns her dance. She hates fishing and she tells Patricia that "I get sick to my stomach just looking at a boat"(460). In their own decline, their failure to realize the promises which America made is the collapse of a dream which is intimately connected with their sense of themselves.77 In the play the two marriages are placed under strain by the differing needs and perceptions of those who once thought they shared so much.

All four characters in The Last Yankee have a sense of insufficiency, of disappointment. The world is not what they took it for nor they what they might have
been. The men, in conventional terms, are mentally strong. Each has some sort of creed whether it’s scientific materialism or a Puritan determination that gets them through each day. The women are all of a more introspective and philosophical bent, an inclination that has nearly paralyzed them. They are, in a way, less glamorous. Though each woman is essentially talking to herself, there is still somehow a connection forged between them. Each character is true to life.

The Last Yankee is a chamber piece, a play of four voices. The Last Yankee is an example of Miller’s more reflective and discursive style. It is deliberately circular and repetitive which uses ordinary domestic exchanges. The hollow clicks of a bouncing Ping-Pong ball being the sounds that open a scene in this play have the fitful and careless cadences of a broken metronome. The dialogue suggests a protracted series of acting exercises. Like all Miller’s best plays, it effortlessly links private and public worlds by connecting personal desperation to insane American values. The play diagnoses a broader American “disappointment” and sense of “failure” through the narrow and generic focus of two women suffering from depression and the self-absorbed husbands who aren’t much help. The play explores the big themes like the blight of the American myth of success, the crippling powers of memory and the struggle to continue through a life that seems devoid of meaning.

Broken Glass

The advent of the Holocaust is the subject of Broken Glass. Broken Glass (1994) is set in 1938 New York against the distant backdrop of Kristallnacht. The time is 1938, the year of the Anschluss when Hitler walked into Austria and announced, “It’s mine,” and of Kristallnacht (the night of broken glass), when rioting
against the Jews in Germany suddenly alerted the rest of the world to everything that was to come. In November 1938, a polish Jew, Hershel Grynszen, assassimates the third secretary of the German Embassy in Paris. The Nazi government used this as an excuse for an explosion of violence against Jews in which synagogues, houses and stores were destroyed and individuals attacked. This was Kristallnacht.

In the thirties Miller had known a woman who had lost the power to walk, and the cause not being physical, was never explained. In the words of Miller:

This is a story, I have known and thought about for fifty years. I thought about it a lot, and years and years later, realized that it was a hysterical paralysis . . . One day, I saw the image of that woman, sitting there unable to move, and nobody knowing why, and it seemed an exact image for the paralysis we all showed then in the face of Hitler . . . But I have not written it before, because it always seemed to be part of the past. Until two years ago, when ethnic cleansing came into the news and suddenly it became part of the present.80

In Broken Glass Miller tells the story of Sylvia and Phillip Gellburg who after years of marriage come to realize that they hardly know each other at all. Phillip is the only Jew working at a very traditional Wall Street bank where he mainly works on foreclosing. Obsessed with work and his own desire to assimilate, Phillip has little time for his wife until she demands his attention by suddenly falling prey to a mysterious paralysis after seeing the events of Kristallnacht in the newspaper. Up until now Sylvia has been a quiet little housewife, but she needs to express her buried fears and longings. Dr. Harry Hyman is called in to help, and though no specialist, he decides the case is a psychiatric one, and proceeds to try and treat Sylvia. Dr. Hyman,
however, has problems of his own which become apparent during his interaction with the Gellburgs.

The play begins in Dr. Harry Hyman’s office. Phillip Gellburg is a small man but he is a gigantic mess. Half of him is as anti-Semitic as Stanton Case, the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, and the head of Brooklyn Guarantee. The other, only vaguely recognized half is the bewildered son of immigrants, a first-generation Jewish American trying to assimilate. From his conversation with Margaret, Dr. Hyman’s wife and nurse, we realize that he had de-ethnicized his name from Goldberg to Gellburg, and is proud that his name is Gellburg and not Goldberg. As his life falls apart, Phillip remembers the joy he experienced many years before like walking down Orchard Street with his then young beautiful bride Sylvia.

Phillip Gellburg wants now to consult Dr. Hyman about his wife Sylvia’s illness. Sylvia has developed an inability to walk, stand up or move her legs. She has been diagnosed as suffering from hysterical paralysis. In every other way, she seems fine though she has been obsessed by the Jews from Germany. This especially irritates Phillip who blames the sensation-mongering newspapers. He tells the doctor that he is also worried about Germany but, after all, it is three thousand miles away. Among other things, he is afraid of the fact that Hitler will give ideas to American anti-Semites. Phillip is desperately conflicted, the sort of passive-aggressive who, in a more conventional drama, would be a supporting character which is the role he would assign himself. In his black suits, black ties, black shoes and white shirts he doesn’t want to call attention to himself.

The action in act II scene I takes place in the office of Stanton Case who is Gellburg’s boss. Gellburg is the only Jew ever hired by the Company and proud of it. As stated by Alice Griffin:
Like Willy Loman, he has bought the American Dream and is proud to head the mortgage department of the Brooklyn Guarantee and Trust (the name may be ironic) as the only Jew they employ. Their Chairman is clearly anti-Semitic. A Yachtsman who is almost a caricature of a capitalist; Mr. Case suspects that Phillip allowed a company rival to acquire a wanted property because they are both Jewish and "'You people' always stick together." Phillip is enraged and he insults his boss. He is fined and suffers a heart attack.\textsuperscript{81}

He feels that he was being used.

In act II scene II, we see Sylvia in a wheelchair listening to "Eddie Cantor on the radio, singing 'If You know Susie Like I Know Susie.'" Sylvia is a nebulous character, a woman who gave up a promising business career of her own to become a good Jewish wife and mother. She has occupied herself with daily chores. She realized, too late, that she had married half a man. Now, in a barren middle age, she has caught a glimpse of the void and panicked. Middle aged Sylvia looking back at a barren relationship laments to Phillip:

What I did with my life! Out of ignorance. Out of not wanting to shame you in front of other people. A whole life. Gave it away like a couple of pennies — I took better care of my shoes(553-54).

Given the mores of that time and society and her amenable personality, and also the influence of her mother, she is not likely to take an independent route, so she turns against herself.

The news about the Nazis' treatment of Jews in Germany evokes horror and fear in Sylvia. She feels that action must be taken to prevent the spread of such cruelty. People around her reveal an attitude of unconcern or disbelief and some like
Phillip believes the refugee German Jews are too "uppity." Most see the Nazis as an aberration in a society that would soon come to its senses—after all it was Germany that gave the world Beethoven and Goethe. She has been seized with hysterical paralysis in her legs after reading in the newspapers about elderly Jews being forced by the Nazis to scrub the sidewalks with toothbrushes on the Kurfrstendamn in Berlin. She tells Phillip that in her parents' house there was love:

Nobody was afraid of anything. But with us, Phillip, wherever I looked there was something to be suspicious about, somebody who was going to take advantage or God knows what. I've been tip-toeing around my life for thirty years... I can't find myself in my life. (567)

According to Miller, Sylvia's paralysis is "partly due to her anxiety, which rises to a peak because she feels nobody is going to do anything about the suffering in Germany." She may have been a victim, like the Jews in Germany with whom she identifies, "but she is also a revolutionary." 82

Sylvia is affected by these events perhaps because she has been victimized by Phillip's persecution. Miller observes, "The center of my concentration was the mystery of how this social political dilemma lodged in this woman's limbs, so to speak, reaching across 3,000 miles of water." Her humiliation by Phillip is reflected in the dream she reports to Dr. Hyman in act II:

Sylvia: 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... Breaks off... 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. (545)
Dr. Harry Hyman is a contrast to Phillip. He, according to Alice Griffin is the catalyst who brings about the change in Sylvia and the realization in Phillip. Dr. Harry Hyman is contented, happily married and aware of his attractiveness to women. He is also athletic, and likable. He resembles a younger version of Charley in Death of a Salesman or Solomon in The Price who stands outside the conflict, advising and offering an objective (often humorous) point of view. He informs the ailing Phillip Gellburg that self-hate is scaring Sylvia to death. Persecution, he explains is not singular:

Dr.Hyman: . . .Yes. Everybody’s persecuted. The poor by the rich, the rich by the poor, the black by the white, the white by the black, the men by the women, the women by the men, the Catholics by the Protestants, the Protestants by the Catholics – and of course all of them by the Jews.(566)

But it is too late for Gellburg to change although he promises to Sylvia as he is dying.

Phillip: ...I tell you, If I live I have to try to change myself (568).

Sylvia balances herself, rises to her feet and “takes a faltering step towards her husband” as the play ends. The characters in the play wrestle above all with their own private demons. Faced with painful truths they have chosen denial but there comes a moment when protective strategy becomes the source of disabling pain.

The play is meticulously constructed. This is evident in the way that Miller eventually reconciles Sylvia’s preoccupation with events in Germany which initially seems associated with some kind of atavistic memory, with what has (or hasn’t) been going on in her bedroom. Miller has provided a realistic setting. The play takes place in Brooklyn, in the last days of November 1938. The scene keeps changing from Sylvia’s bedroom to Dr. Hyman’s clinic and the office of Stanton Case.
As observed by Alice Griffin, Miller imitates Odet’s style which Miller defines as ‘poetic realism.’ It is nowhere as evident as in Broken Glass. The dialogue is a heightened New Yorkese flavored with Yiddish location and rhetorical question.

In act I ‘horse riding’ is used as a sexual metaphor in connection with Dr. Hyman:

Dr. Hyman: Should I tell you what I’d like to do with you?
Margaret: Tell me, yes, tell me. And make it wonderful.
Hyman: We find an island and we strip and go riding on this white horse . . . (506).

This symbol of sexuality recurs in the play. The title of the play ‘Broken Glass’ has literal and figurative meaning. Literally it means “Kristallnacht” – the smashing of synagogues and stores in Germany, against the Jews. At the same time, ‘broken glass’ imagery also suggests the breaking of glass at a Jewish wedding, ‘a reminder of Jewish destruction: the temple in Jerusalem.’ Hyman in his speech brings out the universal connection with regard to the ‘glass’ image. The social theme is supported by powerful metaphors, effective symbols and vivid images.

3.5 Conclusion

The analysis of the plays under study clearly indicates the real social foundation on which Miller’s creative corpus rests and also the real social forces that motivated him to write the plays. This is evident from his apprenticeship plays. In these plays too there is the portrayal of characters as products of American capitalism. Miller insists that the value of art arises from its usefulness from a changing society.
and his early plays provide ample evidence for it. His early plays are written within the conventions of realism.

Unlike other writers, Miller does not indulge in piling up details upon details to concretize the social reality. Instead, he articulates and dramatizes the predicament of his characters in precise and evocative style.

All My Sons vividly depicts the socio-psychological aspects of the United States during and immediately after the Second World War in a realistic setting. More than its obvious social statement about war profiteering or one’s larger responsibility to society, the play’s enduring impact emerges from the anger of the younger men against Keller and his generation. There is something of Miller’s own background and feelings. Miller’s work crystallizes the social climate of his time. Miller attacks the prevailing principle of worshipping success in a consumerist society. Success becomes the credo by which the world of Joe Keller breathes and there are no other values in this world. Death of a Salesman on the other hand, presents us with an individual and a family that have lost their ability to separate fact from fiction, truth from lies, and reality from illusion. The Lomans are so deeply entrenched in the life-lie they have embraced that they find it nearly impossible to communicate with each other without resorting to the clichéd rhetoric they have imbibed from the prevailing success myths in their capitalistic society. The play explores the tragic dimensions of a society that fails to see the human being for what he is. Willy Loman’s cry, “a man a piece of fruit. You cannot eat the orange and throw the peel away” is pathetic in its unyielding wilderness of concrete jungle that is American society. It is a realistic drama about modern man’s downfall. It is also an examination of the delusions attendant on the pursuit of the American Dream.
Miller exposed the emptiness of the American Dream in *Death of a Salesman* and *A View from the Bridge*. In *Death of a Salesman* he offers a stark portrait of the American Dream. Miller explored the dashed hopes and ruin that were so often the consequences of pursuing that dream. He is the late twentieth century's most eloquent writer of the devalued American Dream. Willy's illusions of materialistic success relate to the myth of the American Dream. Miller's legitimate hostility to aspects of American life comes through the *Death of a Salesman* in places quite eloquently. In *Death of a Salesman* Miller found a highly original way of dramatizing the gap between the American Dream and its achievements.

In *A View from the Bridge* there is a conflict between community and American law. The play emphasizes the theme of responsibilities for one's actions not only to one's family but also to the larger world. Miller's characters function more intelligibly as fathers, sons, husbands or wives in a family setting than as citizens in society. However, the protagonist of *A View from the Bridge* acts in a specific social milieu that conditions his sense of guilt as well as his sense of dignity. It depicts the immigrants' rush to America as they are enchanted by the American myth. The play also has a political perspective.

*After the Fall* presents a contemporary Everyman haunted by images of concentration camps whose salvation waits in a woman who fought the Nazis. Miller develops the idea of realization and acceptance of the innate culpability within each of us. The play asserts that not only do we have a share in the fall, but we perpetuate it too. *Incident at Vichy* is a one-act play about a group of arrested Jews in the waiting room of a French police station in 1942. Miller paints a chilling picture of the process by which frightened people explain away the warning signs of imminent catastrophe. The play reflects Miller's biases and predilections. *Broken Glass* is a portrait of
suffering and the exploration of morality. The fear and the moral questions of the Holocaust are brilliantly analyzed in the play. Miller poses the question of what role Jewish-Americans should play in the States as well as how they should react to the atrocities happening across the Atlantic. Miller creates a beautiful and often haunting canvas of characters and paints a vivid picture of the questions and fears facing the Jews during the Second World War.\textsuperscript{85} The untangling of personal and political traumas is no less painful in\textit{After the Fall} but are more authentic. It is about the processes of denial, equivocation and accommodation. These three plays\textit{Broken Glass}, \textit{After the Fall} and\textit{Incident at Vichy} reveal that the Holocaust has both historical importance and contemporary relevance. Moreover, it is very clear that Miller is not interested in the historical narrative of the Holocaust per se. His plays do not shed light on unknown details or address the political repercussions of the event. Instead, they are concerned with the ethical issues confronting an individual in the face of monolithic power. The themes – identifying with the victim, the universal character of evil and the need for responsible individual action – resonate throughout all the plays of Miller and are particularly central in these works about the Holocaust.

\textbf{The American Clock, The Last Yankee and The Price} on the other hand, depict the impact of Depression on the American society.\textit{The Price} extends with greater maturity Miller’s social outlook converging on a family unit in American society. The play reveals that human affairs and relationships are seen in terms of profit and loss.\textit{The Price} is a play that not only tries to unravel the inextricable tag of ‘price’ attached to every aspect of life but also accentuates the irrelevance of finally worrying about the ‘price’ that one has to pay for the choices one made in life.

\textbf{The American Clock} deals overtly with social issues. It was written against the background of the oblong blur that Miller identified in late 1970s America. It
challenges the historical importance of the essentially middle class youth revolt of the 1960s and 1970s by describing it as a period of genuine privation in which the personal became political by force of circumstances rather than an act of will. The American Clock shows how people came to terms with the disaster that overwhelmed them. The American Clock is indeed a critique of American capitalistic society and its moral and social standards. The audiences and readers have seen it in that light for decades. It is a time bomb placed under the edifice of Americanism. The play is based on the Great crash which transformed America. After the crash, the economy was paralyzed. Miller in The Last Yankee returns to the theme that shattered audiences of Death of a Salesman: the destruction of the individual and the family by the false values of the market place. The play symbolizes ideals lost in the complexities of modern life. Leroy Hamilton is indeed “the Last Yankee,” for he clings to the founding fathers’ belief in independence, tolerance and hard work.

McCarthyism crystallized and politicized the anxieties of a nation living in a dangerous new era. It forms the basis of The Crucible. The Crucible demonstrates, step by step, the human and social process by which a lie gets legitimized as the truth. Miller does not deny the obvious contemporary relevance but insists that he has been preoccupied with a problem larger than the investigation going on during that time. As noted earlier, Miller explains the social and religious causes of the puritan madness in a long commentary accompanying the play. It analyzes public phenomena with historical precedent.

Often overlooked is Miller’s talent for revealing the complexities and conflicts of his individual characters within a group situation, be it a family or politics or business, set within the larger environment of society itself. Miller has created the
strongest unforgettable individuals who exhibit universal appeal: Willy Loman is the best example, but Linda Loman, Joe Keller, John Proctor, Eddie Carbone and Sylvia Gellburg share this distinction. Many of Miller's plays centre on families and by concentrating on their pleasures, problems and relationships Miller explores in microcosm, society as a whole.

He probed beneath the surface of postwar life. The dreariness of post-war America did not frighten him because he had known dreariness. He accepted it with good grace. Miller's special role was to become the registrar and chronicler of drab social and political prospects – all the while holding out for maintaining a good conscience and doing good work. These plays show Miller's sympathy for the 'common man' who inhabits an obscure corner of modern capitalistic society. Miller reveals his humanitarian concern through these plays. His plays dissect social and political issues from an intimate viewpoint. In the final analysis in his plays, society itself "becomes the work of art."

Chapter Notes


2Ibid.,21.

Ibid., 60.


12 Arthur Miller, Timebends 134-35.


Alice Griffin, *Death of a Salesman*, 35-36.


Ibid., 34.


32 “The Language of The Crucible,” www.google.com

<www.angliacampus.com/public/sec/english/crucible/page36.htm> 05/06/03.


All references to the text are from this edition.


37 Ibid., 152.


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

44 Alice Griffin, “After the Fall and Incident at Vichy,” Understanding Arthur Miller (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996) 114.


49 Arthur Miller, “A Foreword by the Author,” 32.

50 Alice, Griffin, “After the Fall and Incident at Vichy,” 116.

51 Ibid., 127-28.


54 Arthur Miller, Incident at Vichy (New York: Penguin, 1985) All references to this text are from this edition.


Ibid.,109.


72 Alice Griffin, “Two Plays of the Depression,” 110.


77 Ibid., 174.

78 Christopher Bigsby, “Miller in the Nineties,” 176-7.

79 Arthur Miller, “Broken Glass,” The Portable Arthur Miller. All references to the text are from this edition.


81 Alice Griffin, “Plays of the 1990s,” 187.

82 Interview with the author, New York City (13 May 1994).

83 Alice Griffin, “Plays of the 1990s,” 189.
