

Themes and Techniques of the Early Plays of Arthur Miller

Abstract

The early plays of Arthur Miller deal in the domestic, social as well as the financial problems prevalent in the surrounding. The technique adopted by Miller is stream of consciousness. As according to Miller present can not be set apart from the past. Therefore there is no need to change the scene and stage as the past is being lived in the minds of the characters. Arthur Miller makes use of this technique in a competent way so as to make the audience realize the pain and anguish being felt by the characters.

Keywords: Impending Disaster, Acceptance of Moral Responsibility, Domestic Tragedy, Pragmatism and Idealism, Crime and Atonement, Moral Jurisprudence, Expressionistic Technique, Mythology of America, Failure of Success Dream, Inner Anguish, Restlessness Inside of His Head, Ultimate Assertion, Orange Peel Theory, Pathetic Comedy.

Introduction

Arthur Miller's first play, *The Man who had All the Luck* (1994), depicts a character who attempts to fight free of received notions of success as well as his own sense of impending disaster. It is a dream about young David Friaber, who owns several prosperous businesses has a successful marriage, is a happy father. Viewing the frustration and unhappiness of other people in the small town where he lives, David becomes Obsessed with the idea that some disaster awaits him, too, and he accepts his own superiority and the golden touch of success.

By observing those around him, frieber becomes convinced that there is a law of disaster at work in the universe. However, he feels that he will be safe after he has suffered some set back, and comes to believe that the disaster in store for him is the death of the child he and his wife are expecting. In preparation for that disaster, and in an effort to measure himself against his fate, David mortgages everything to start a mink-farm, an enterprise that depends entirely on his own skill and attention. When the expected calamity does not materialize and his baby is born healthy, Frieber becomes even more apprehensive of some impending disaster. In the end, when some poisoned feed has been prepared for the animals by mistake, his wife persuades him that he must take fate into his own hands by allowing the mink to die: "It's not that they must die. It's that you're got to kill them... I want you to know once and for all that it was you who did it." Like the other characters in Miller's plays, though more artificially, David is thus forced into an acceptance of moral responsibility.¹

The stage is cluttered with a superfluity of minor characters who seem to have moved in from Winesburg, Ohio, and lost something in the process. Theatrical tact is lacking here. Miller tries to create the sense of a community, a real town, by crowding the stage with people in a spirit of mistaken nationalism. But the stage-directions are meticulous.

Miller summarizes the story of the man who had all the luck: "The man who had all the luck was investigation to discover what exact part a man played in his own fate. It deals with a young man in a small town who, by the time he is in his mid-twenties, owns several growing businesses, has married that girl he loves, is the father of a child he has always wanted, and is daily becoming convinced that as his desires are gratified he is causing to accumulate around his own head and invisible but nearly palpable fund, so to speak, of retribution. The Law of life, as he observes life around him, is that people are always frustrated in some important regard; and he conceives that he must be too, and the play is built around his conviction of impending disaster. The disaster never comes, even when, in effect, he tries to bring it or in order to survive it and find peace. Instead, he comes to believe in his own superiority, and in his remarkable ability to succeed."²

All my sons (1947) makes a wider impression. Miller implicates the domestic tragedy of Joe Keller, a war profiteer who manufactures faulty



Neelam Tandon

Associate Professor,
Deptt. of English,
Govt. Degree College,
Talbehat, Lalitpur

airplane engines, into larger issues of pragmatism and idealism, crime and atonement, justice and love. The play grows out of the war only in so far as the subject of Joe Keller's sale of defective machine parts to the air force is concerned. Actually he did not intend to present war-profiteering in the play. It was rooted in Miller's conviction that social responsibility transcends self-interest. His concern is with the ethics in the context of common reality: he pursues, as one critic noted, a "moral jurisprudence." In the alley are practical: the bums who ran away when we were fighting were practical. Only the dead ones weren't practical.³ It is a realistic thesis play illustrating the theme that a man must recognize "his ethical responsibility to the world outside his home as well as in his own home."

Miller's interest in the subject of guilt is traditional and follows the usual pattern of wrong doing and its consequences. Nothing is more obvious than this in *All My Sons*. Joe Keller has submerged his guilt remains private, and it bears the facade of respectability and success. But, as is demonstrated in the plays of Henrik Ibsen, the past that contains the substance of wrong doing, will inevitably project itself into the present. In other words, a man will never escape the consequence of his actions. For Joe Keller, it is the constant memory of his son Larry's death, and the revealed information that it was caused by defective cylinder-heads for planes supplied by his own firm.

Miller has used expressionistic technique with the use of cinematic technique of flashbacks time and again. A discerning critic could trace Miller's ancestry back to Sardou, the master of the "well-made play" formula for stage craftsmen, and in retrospect Miller was inclined to concede the reproach. He wrote, "I felt, I had to perfect conventional technique first and *All My Sons* was an exercise." Still it was no small feat to compose so taut and driving a problem play and at the same time to create a living background and to present a flow of real human relationships, that recall the early work of Ibsen. The observation and passion in the play, moreover, were singularly Miller's own expression of personality. As John Mason Brown noted, "Mr. Miller's own voice could be heard in all my sons, rising strong and clear... It spoke with heat, fervour and compassion." In the construction of the play also Miller could be described as one of Ibsen's numerous descendants in the modern theatre. Miller himself writes about the form, "The form of *All My Sons* is a reflection and an expression of several forms, of only some of which I was conscious. I desired above all to write rationally, to write so that I could tell the story of the play to even an unlettered person and spark a look of recognition on his face."⁴

"The play is a social dream, not as an attack on the capitalist business ethic, but as a study of the bewildered common man groping in a world where moral values have become a shifting quicksand, where you ask for guidance from others no surer than yourself, and when the simplest lesson-moral responsibility to others-is the hardest to learn."⁵

The achievement of Miller as a playwright comes with *Death of a Salesman* (1949). This work creates the unforgettable figure of the again Willy Loman. It penetrates the mythology of America, whose

illusions lead to Willy's ruin as salesman, husband, father, his ultimate ruin as a man.

Through memory and dramatic retrospection, a "mobile concurrency of a past and present" retrieves his life, the bitterness and "ecstasy of spirit" that he chases to the end. The play puts not only the Lomans but a whole society on trial; above all, it questions the human condition that corrupts the need of love and reduces a bright dream to suicide. Willy fails, but his failed son, Biff, moves to redeem both father and son from their failures. That is the sole solace of a play, close at times to pathos, yet in its purposeful passion, its sobriety of scenes, undeniably a classic of Postwar drama. In regard to its tragic aspect Miller states, "As a general rule, to which there may be exceptions unknown to me, I think the tragic feeling is evoked in us when we are in the presence of a character who is ready to lay down his life, if need be, to secure one thing-his sense of personal dignity."⁶

The characters and background of the play are fresh precisely because they are vividly recognizable. Miller's compassionate scrutiny of little lives communicates itself spontaneously although he keeps a firm hand on the sequence of events and revelations. The play displays life multi-dimensionally and in depth. The surfacing of guilt in this play is more complex and psychological. Willy Loman is a more complex character than Joe. The main source of Willy's guilt is the failure of his success dream. Over a life of wrong illusions Willy makes one false move after another in pursuit of easy success. This is indicated by his stories of bigness as also by his smiling acceptance of all the little vices, like thieving and lying, which ruin the career of his two sons, Biff and Happy. Willy's illusion of success consists of a simple formula: "you talk big, have an aggressive personality and you can conquer the world." He tells his sons, "...the man who makes an appearance in the business world, the man who creates personal interest, is the man who gets ahead. He is liked and you will never want. You take me, for instance. I never have to wait in line to see a buyer. 'Willy Loman is here!' That's all they have to know, and I go right through."¹ But his wife knows well, Willy's pose of bigness is a fraud. In fact, he is a small, insignificant man and he knows it.

He is fake and yet he keeps up the pose till the end. This is the main cause of his inner anguish, his restlessness, his guilt. Increases by the feeling that he has failed his sons. All his life he has encouraged the notion in Biff's mind that he (Biff) is number one, a super-special Adonis who can lick the world with his little finger. But as Willy sees his sons go down in the world over the years, his burden and his responsibility in his sons' failure become almost unbearable.

Miller says, "The first image that occurred to me, which was to result in *Death of a Salesman*, was of an enormous face the height of the proscenium arch which would appear and then open up, and we would see the inside of a man's head."⁷ Of course, the first title of this play was the *Inside of his Head* but later on it was changed to the *Death of a Salesman*.

In the final stages the play takes a dramatic turn when a realization of truth comes to both Willy and Biff. Willy's awareness leads him to the decision

of suicide, preceded by the symbolic sowing of seed in the ground to enable him to feel that he has finally done something worthwhile. Briff's realization of truth is more articulated: "Pop! I'm a dime a dozen, and so are you!" and again "will you take that phoney dream and burn it before something happens?"⁸

About the mingling of past and present Miller says, "the salesman image was from the beginning absorbed with the concept that nothing in the life comes "next" but that every-thing exists together and at the same time within us; that there is no past to be "brought forward" in a human being, but that he is his past at every moment and that the present is merely that which his past is capable of noticing and smelling and reacting to."⁹

After the production of *Death of a Salesman*, critics started discussing whether Willy was at all a tragic character. Miller himself proves Willy to be a tragic hero in his own words: "had Willy been Unaware of his separation from value that endure, he would have died contentedly while polishing his car, probably on a Sunday afternoon with the ball game coming over the radio. But he was agonized by his awareness of being in a false position, so constantly hunted by the hollowness of all he had placed his faith in, so aware, in short, that he must somehow be filled in his spirit of fly apart, that he staked his very life on the ultimate assertion."

On the other hand, in his celebratory essay "tragedy and the common Man" Miller tends to cast his tragic protagonist as entirely a victim or the capitalist society with its utter disregard of human values. He emphasizes the "orange-peel" theory of which there is substantial support in the play. He discovers evil or the cause of men's destruction only in his environment. Actually Miller becomes increasingly interested in discovering the evil in society and man's direct or indirect responsibility in the continued existence of this evil.

Death of a Salesman is again written in expressionistic technique with past and present mingled together. His style of dialogue is the same as in *All My Sons*. But Miller says that, "there are no flashbacks in this play but only a mobile concurrency of past and present, and this again, because in his desperation to justify his life Willy Loman has destroyed the boundaries between now and then, just as anyone would do who, on picking up his telephone, discovered that this perfectly harmless act had somehow set off an explosion in his basement."¹⁰

Miller here employs flexible dramaturgy, moving from a present crisis to eruptive scenes of reminiscence and richness of a novel without losing dramatic power. As he himself declares:

"...the conventional play from forces the writer to siphon everything into a single place at a single time, and squeezes the humanity out of a play. Why shouldn't a play have the depth, the completeness, and the diversity of a novel?" Miller demonstrated to those who were familiar with his earlier work that he was capable of artistic growth, having graduated from the "well-made-play" grammar school of modern playwriting.

The play won both the Pulitzer prize and the Drama Critics Circle award, as well as sundry other prizes. Brooks Atkinson in the *New York Times*,

Called *Death of a Salesman* "one of the finest dramas in the whole range of the American theatre." Even the usually more skeptical Wolcott Gibbs, writing in the *New Yorker*, set it down as "a tremendously affecting work... told with a mixture of compassion, imagination, and hard technical competence you don't often find in the theatre today." Ivor Brown noted that "now on both sides of the Atlantic we have stool tragedies, not throne tragedies," and that "It is the clerk, not the king, who inspires the tragedian."

Eleanor Clark in *Partisan Review* saw Miller as a Marxist who had been confused by tragedy: "It is, of course, the capitalist system that has done Willy in; the scene in which he is brutally fired after some forty years with the firm comes straight from the party-line literature of the thirties..." of course the origin of the false ideals of both father and sons is particular from of money economy.

Miller defines his aim in the play as being "to set forth what happens when a man does not have a grip on the forces of life and has no sense of values which will lead him to that kind of a grip."

The Crucible (1953) is a drama about the Salem witch trials of 1692, based on court records and historical personages. When the daughter of Salem's unpopular minister falls mysteriously ill, rumours of witchcraft spread throughout the town. With a group of young friends, the girl has been secretly engaged in forbidden dancing and cavorting in the woods. When the minister accuses Abigail Williams, the ringleader, of wrongdoing, she transforms the accusation into a plea for help; she says that her soul has been bewitched. Abigail sees in this role the opportunity of getting rid of Elizabeth Proctor, the wife of John Proctor, an upstanding farmer whom she had once seduced. Deflecting charges from themselves, the young girls, led by Abigail accuses Elizabeth Proctor. Then, in an effort to expose Abigail's vindictive motives, John Proctor reveals his past lechery. Elizabeth, unaware of his confession, fails to confirm his testimony; to protest him she testifies falsely that her husband has not been intimate with Abigail. Proctor himself is then accused of witchcraft. Arrested and condemned to death, he refuses the chance to save his life by "confession," his traffic with the devil, and he goes to his death.

In this way the play presents an obvious reflection of current events, an allegory of our times. Controversy tends, therefore, towards its deeper interests: the inevitable clash of private and public motives, the mysterious capacity of terror to create a reality independent of fact or history, the administration of conscience. Against these, against the superstition of his neighbours, the crazed love of Abigail, the evil of his judges, John Proctor stands not so much a hero or martyr as a man possessed of full consciousness. His true enemy may be even deeper, gratuitous evil, Miller says regarding it, "I think now that one of the hidden weaknesses of our whole approach to dramatic psychology is our inability... to conceive, in effect, of *Iago*."¹¹ This theme attracted Miller because it dealt with, "... the central theme of our social life today. Simply, it is the question of whether the democratic guarantees protecting political minorities ought to be set aside in time of crisis. More personally, it is the question of whether

one's vision of the truth ought to be a source of guilt at a time when the mass of men condemn it as a dangerous and devilish lie. It is an enduring theme.. because there never was, nor will there ever be, an organized society able to countenance calmly the individual who insists that he is right while the vast majority is absolutely wrong."¹²

Miller wished to write a play that "would life out of the morass of subjectivism the squirming, single defined process which would Show that the sin of public terror is that it divests man of conscience, of himself." He had strong feelings about the Stature of the public mind, and it is apparent from both the play and the explanation of it offered in his introduction to his collected plays, that the political situation of the period had acquired moral and spiritual connotations for him. "It was not only the rise of 'Mc Carthyism' that moved me, but something which was much more weird and mysterious. It was the fact that a political, objective, knowledgeable campaign from the far right was capable of creating not only a terror, but a new subjective reality, a veritable mystique which was gradually assuming even a holy resonance. That so interior and subjective an emotion could have been so manifestly created from without was normal to me. IT underlies every word in the Crucible."¹³

The play creates anger rather than pity or melancholy. It reveals the horror and tragedy which result from mass hysteria and injustice. During its initial run, the play's impact was increased by the parallels which most playgoers saw to the communist witchcraft then being conducted by united states senator Joseph McCarthy.

As far as the theme of guilt is concerned, with the Crucible, Miller's attention begins to be drawn to another kind of wrong-doing and its consequent guilt. In the earlier plays, man's weaknesses and imperfection were portrayed for a sympathetic understanding of his guilt. The crucible also portrays the theme of individual guilt in the moral lapse of its protagonist, John Proctor, in having made advances to the maid Abigail. The development and resolution of this individual guilt, although dramatically satisfying, is not the main concern of the play.

The main situation in The Crucible is the practice of universal evil and wrong-doing, operating in the guise of social good. This is the evil of repression and witch-hunting to which several innocent individuals fall victim. So, if a whole community is engaged in an act of injustice, where does the guilt belong? what is the responsibility of the enlightened individual in such circumstances? for most it is the expression of a passive indignation which becomes a shield against guilt and individual responsibility.

In the introduction to his collected Plays Miller refers to the circumstances in which the crucible was written. The rise of 'Mc Carthyism' had produced a climate of fear and suspicion, and most well-meaning people had compiled by their silence. In this respect the historical incident of salem witchtrials becomes an allegory of contemporary life: "In The Crucible, however, there was an attempt to move beyond the discovery and unveiling of the hero's guilt, a guilt that kills the personality. I had grown increasingly conscious of this theme in my past work,

and aware too that it was no longer enough for me to build a play, as it were, upon the revelation of guilt, and to rely solely upon a fate which exacts payment from the culpable man. Now guilt appeared to me no longer the bedrock beneath which the probe could not penetrate.

I saw it now as a betrayer, as possibly the most real of our illusions, but nevertheless a quality of mind capable of being overthrown."¹⁴

The depiction of a widespread evil in the Crucible indicates that participation in such evil is generally the expression of guilt, under the cover of self-righteous accusations of others: "It suddenly became possible-and patriotic and holy- for a man to say that Martha Corey had come into his bedroom at night, and that while his wife was sleeping aside, Martha had laid herself down on his chest and "nearly suffocated him." In this sense guilt served as a cathartic agent or a means of purgation through confession. Scandly, the cumulative and unconscious guilt of a community erupts into various forms of violence and repression. Usually, this violence seeks scapegoats, the ritualistic sacrificing of which tends to provide the outlet and purgation of one's own evil.

Miller has said categorically that were he to re-write what he regards as already 'a"tough"play', he would make it tougher by accentuating this evil still more: "I believe merely that, from whatever cause, a dedication to evil not mistaking if for good, but knowing it as evil and loving it as possible in human beings who appear agreeable and normal."¹⁵

The play's moral is the very Shavian one that in the life of a society evil is occasioned less by deliberate villainy than by the abnegation of personal responsibility. That is why Elizabeth quietly rejects as 'the Devil's argument' when Hale says: "Life, women, life is god's most precious gift; no principle, however glorious, may justify the taking of it." Elizabeth has learnt through suffering that 'God's most precious gift' is not life at any price, but the life of spiritual freedom and moral integrity. She replies to Hale in the play's idiom: "I think that be the Devil's argument." She believes this, but cannot prove it: I cannot dispute with you, Sir: I lack learning for it."¹⁶ The learning of the scholars, the theologians, and the rulers is discredited, but not defeated, by the simple faith of a country woman.

Miller has reached technical achievement in this play by the use of a new form of language adopted to its demands. The rustic-archaic speech of miller's characters gives them a natural eloquence and simple dignity. There is a forthrightness about The Crucible that is as well supported by its language as by its structural simplicity. Miller comments: "I was drawn to this subject because the historical moment seemed to give me the poetic right to create people of higher self-awareness than the contemporary scene affords. I had explored the subjective world in *Salesman* and I wanted now to move closer to a conscious hero." The Crucible is more theatrical than *Death of a Salesman* though it is not more realistic.

A *Memory of two Mondays* (1995) is a one act play that examines a group of factory workers trapped without hope of relief in their mechanical jobs and dreary times. In *two Mondays*, separated by a

span of years, one in the hot summer, the other in the winter of a new year, the pointless and empty lives of the workers are revealed; only Bert, a Poor student, show some hope of escaping. On the first Monday, Bert starts at the factory in order to earn money for a college education. On the second Monday, Bert takes leave of his friends, whose Jobs and lives have remained unchanged. Awkwardly, he tries to find the right words for parting. His friends, unable to believe that anyone escapes the factory, all but ignore him. Bert finally leaves and with him go the hope and optimism that have brightened the factory.

It is through the memory of Bert we are shown the warehouse, its occupants, and such action as the play has: although in reality an unspecified number of months have passed between the opening and the closing of the action; time is compressed in his memory and there is thus no need for formal division into scenes. The continuity of flow suggests the unity of Bert's experience, the time gap between the two Mondays being marked only by a brief soliloquy by him, followed by a semi-lyrical exchange with another character. Surprised that the play "was seen as something utterly sad and hopeless as comment on life," Miller argues that it show Bert working his way out of "this endless time-less, will-less environment." It is not Bert who stays in our mind, though, so much as the company in which he moves, and their aura of diminishing hope.

The passage of time is hinted at by unobtrusive signs of ageing in all the characters in the second part; not only have they all calcified a little but Bert has matured in his view of them. Miller's theme here is, as in *All my Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*, the adjustment of the young person to the disillusion and compromises of adult life. Bert, like Biff and Happy, is at least young enough for this to be convincing, unlike Chris Keller. Miller's own pre-college experience between 1932 and 1934 indicates an autobiographical basis for this deeply felt and nostalgic piece of writing. It is the most dated of all his work: "so much so", he confesses wrongly, "that many took it for granted it had been written a long time ago and exhumed." As he says, "the play speaks not of obsession but of rent and hunger and the need for a little poetry in life." It is not "utterly sad" but it is what Miller calls it "a pathetic comedy", and it evokes, in a way not easy to define, the atmosphere of the 1930s:

"A Memory of two Mondays is a pathetic comedy; ... I wrote it, I suppose, in part out of a desire to relive a sort of reality where necessity was open and bare; I hoped to define for myself the value of hope, why it must arise, as well as the heroism of those who, know, at least, how to endure its absence"¹⁷ Discretion or retrospect has eliminated any period propaganda and the Pathetic is well kept in check by touches of humour. There is also a realistic grasp of human nature that goes beyond pathos. The personal ties that develop between people who are brought together only by their employment are shown with real insight. Within its limited scope the character of Gus-bawdy, crude, sentimental, inarticulate, irresponsible, yet generous, kind-hearted, and with his own sense of values and loyalty-is one of Miller's richest achievements.

A Memory of two Mondays is clearly a minor play by a major playwright, who has learnt to coordinate all the constituent elements into a unified pattern. The formal patterning of the play helps to suggest the exposure to experience that Bert is undergoing. The repetition of situations and the sequence of incidents in the two halves, the recurrence of similar snatches of conversation, and the sustained focal passivity of Bert, all establish this sufficiently, so that the little verse soliloquy that Miller allows him towards the end seems not only self-conscious but is in keeping with Bert's adolescence. The movement, rhythm and form of the play have brought out, quietly and without didacticism, the monotony of the warehouse existence and the differences between Bert and the rest. Its mood is lyrical; both the unity of mood that it sustains and the passivity of its central figure dictate its shape.

A View from the Bridge (1955) is a drama concerning the tragic consequence of Eddie Carbone's incestuous love for his eighteen year old niece Catherine, whom he adopted after her mother's death. Eddie's wife Beatrice hides her cousins Marco and Rodolpho, illegal Sicilian immigrants, in the Carbone apartment while they await forged papers. Young and handsome, Rodolpho falls in love with Catherine, and she with him. Eddie's unconscious jealousy drives him to violent outbursts of rage and to sneering comments about Rodolpho's lack of masculinity. Finally, he betrays the two men to the immigration authorities. Although the young couple's hasty marriage prevents Rodolpho's deportation, Marco, who has wanted only to earn money for his family in Italy, must return. Enraged by Eddie's violation of his trust, Marco appears before Eddie's house and demands vengeance for Eddie's cowardly betrayal. Catherine and Rodolpho, fearing bloodshed, plead with Eddie not to answer. But Eddie, also bound by Marco's conception of honour, cannot ignore the accusation made against him and must face Marco to preserve his pride. Beatrice hysterically blurts out Eddie's real motive for the betrayal; his repressed love for Catherine. Eddie, unable to face the truth and compelled to face his accuser runs into the street to die at Marco's hands.

Miller's original explanation about the play is: "I have made the assumption that the audience is like me and would like to see, for once, a fine, high, always visible arc of forces, moving in full view to a single explosion." The theme is an unusual one for Miller, and at first sight its preoccupation with incestuous desires and suspicious of homosexuality might suggest Tennessee Williams. "The play's main topic," as Popkin says, "has become Eddie's troubles, but so it had been for John Proctor, without prompting comparisons between that play and Williams' work. Proctor's infatuation with Abigail is over before the play begins, whereas Eddie's problems are very much alive throughout the play. Proctor's infidelity is presented as morally wrong- in the context of the play, sinful; Eddie's difficulties are more confused-and to him more confusing-because they are largely unconscious and unconsummated. Yet there is, in A View from the Bridge, a highly-charged atmosphere of suppressed sexuality that erupts from time to time

and with which all the moments of dramatic crisis are associated.

Miller's judgement of Eddie invites us temporarily to suspend our normal values. We see that however one might dislike this man, who does all sorts of frightful things, he possesses or exemplifies the wondrous and human fact that he too can be driven to what in the last analysis is a sacrifice of himself for his conception, however misguided, of dignity, justice and righteousness.

Miller's insistence throughout his work on the individual's duty to his own conscience is widened here by the recognition that his conscience may mislead him. *Avium* from the Bridge is tragic because of Eddie's integrity sustained to his own destruction against the counsels of his friends and code of his society. It may bring unexpectedly into focus the tragic integrity of Eddie Carbone, but it does not minimize the enormity or the ugliness of his betrayal of his family.

To express the dualism of this view, Miller's dialogue, blending Eddie's Brooklyn Vernacular with the more imaginative speech of Rodolpho and Alfieri, is better than the original poetic idiom would have been, because of its greater realism. The dramatic climaxes of this play do not rely on words, but are passions visualized in action. The intensity of action is often deliberately contrasted with the casualness of the dialogue. As with all Miller's Plays, there is an effect of great power of immediacy, and above all of a deeply-felt human concern. The skill of construction is once again allied to a dexterous manipulation of the dramatic lens so as to bring into focus two views of the same sequence of events, and the disciplined handling of elemental passions suggests new potentialities in Miller.

As for as the later plays are concerned, Miller starts once again on the same path. He goes on investigating what exact part man plays in his own fate. *After the Fall* is the drama of someone who knows and accepts his identity and is conscious of his unique relationship to other people. The protagonist of Miller's first period struggled, for the most part unsuccessfully, to discover what they were. In his last three plays, Miller is concerned with the effect his protagonists have had on other and their capacity to accept full responsibility for what they have or have not done. The theme of *Incident at Vichy* is the prosecution of the Jews. In *The Creation of the World and Other Business*, the dilemma for God himself is his inability to determine his own responsibility for the indifference to murder in the minds of his most gratifying successful creatures. *The Price* is rather a domestic play in which two brothers, when they meet after sixteen years, evaluate the price they had to pay for what they are today. *The American Clock* specifically depicts the havoc played by the Depression of 1930s. Depression had usually been a minor topic in almost all plays of Miller, but in *The American Clock* it occupies the main theme.

Though Miller goes on using the same realistic and expressionistic technique in his later plays, now his style is quite refined and very much developed. Miller himself comments: "The truth is that I have never been able to settle upon a single useful style. Indeed, a great part of the energy that goes into a play is involved in working out its form and style.

Form in the theatre is particularly important, for obvious reasons, and the style of the play alerts an audience as to how to receive it, and at which level of emotion the evening is purporting to function. I suspect, in fact, that because of shifts in style from one play to the next, several of them have had to appear a second time in order to be accepted at all, or even sensibly judged. It has been said often enough to bear repeating-an author is better off writing the same thing in the same way, otherwise he risks losing what audience he may have gained. But fitting means to matter is the same of the game for me and a far more rewarding pleasure."¹⁸

The theme and technique of Miller's later plays are not quite different from the theme and technique of his early plays. In his later plays he introduces new themes as well as repeats the themes already introduced. In the same way he has used the same devices that he used in the early plays, though the technique is refined and developed. The early plays are largely related to the later plays. I have discussed the three plays *After the Fall*, *The Price* and *The American Clock* in detail to examine this relationship.

References

1. Dennis Welland, "Three Early Plays," Miller the Playwright Methuen, (London and New York: 1983) P. 20.
2. Jhon Gassner, Ed. "All my Sons", Best American Plays, Third Series- 1945-1951, (New York: Crown Publishers 1974) P.315.
3. Miller, *The Theatre Essays of Arthur Miller*, P. 126.
4. Welland, Op. cit. p. 29.
5. Arthur Miller, "Tragedy and the Common Man," *The Theatre Essays of Arthur Miller*, P. 125.
6. Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, (London: Creasset Press, 1949). pp. 25-26.
7. Miller, *Theatre Essays of Arthur Miller*, P. 135.
8. Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, pp. 105-6
9. Miller, *Theatre Essays of Arthur Miller*, p. 136
10. Miller, "Introduction to the collected plays." p. 139.
11. Arthur Miller, "Introduction", *Collected Plays* (New York: The Viking Press, 1957). p. 44.
12. Miller \, *the Theatre Essays of Arthur Miller*, pp. 17-18.
13. Miller, "Introduction", *Collected Plays*, p.39
14. Miller, "Introduction", *Collected Plays*, p.155.
15. Ibid., p. 155.
16. Miller, "The crucible", *Collected Plays*, p.320
17. Miller, "Introduction", *Collected Plays*, p.154.
18. Arthur Miller, "Introduction," *Collected Plays*, Vol. II, p.2.