INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL PARALYSIS IN THE LATER PLAYS OF ARTHUR MILLER

Ph.D. Thesis

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Individual and Social Paralysis in the Later Plays of Arthur Miller

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DECLARATION

I, **Ambika Singh**, declare that this thesis titled, **"INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL PARALYSIS IN THE LATER PLAYS OF ARTHUR MILLER"** and the work presented in it, are my own. I confirm that:

- This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this university.
- Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this university or any other institution, this has been clearly stated.
- Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed.
- Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work.
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help.
- Where the thesis is based on work done by myself, jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself.

February 5, 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **"INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL PARALYSIS IN THE LATER PLAYS OF ARTHUR MILLER"**, being submitted by **Ms. Ambika Singh (2014RHS9502)** is a bonafide research work carried out under my supervision and guidance in fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Malaviya National Institute of Technology Jaipur, India. The matter embodied in this thesis is original and has not been submitted to any other university or institute for the award of any other degree.

Jaipur, India
February 5, 2019

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an investigation into eight of Arthur Miller's later plays: *I Can't Remember Anything* and *Clara* (collectively titled, *Danger: Memory*-1987), *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* (1991), *The Last Yankee* (1993), *Broken Glass* (1994), *Mr. Peters' Connections* (1998), *Resurrection Blues* (2002), and *Finishing the Picture* (2004).

Chapter 1, American Theatre and Arthur Miller: An Overview, is an introductory chapter, giving a brief yet comprehensive summary of the growth of theatre in America and of Arthur Miller as one of its most eminent twentieth century contributors. This chapter concisely highlights all important landmarks of American theatre history till the point when Arthur Miller entered the scene and changed it for the better. By providing an outline of the history of American drama, the chapter traces the complete journey of Arthur Miller as a writer and playwright. And while summarising the evolution of Miller's literary canon, the chapter also explores in detail the various literary influences that inspired the structure, content, and technique employed in his plays. Its subsection, "Review of Literature" is a brief summary of the main research papers and books available on the selected plays that have been used as references for this study. In its last part, the chapter also includes this thesis' main "research questions" and the "methodology" applied to answer them and draw conclusions.

Chapter 2, "The Water is in the Fish": The Numbed Numbs, explores how "individual" and "society" are inseparable units and how the paralysis of one is bound to cause the paralysis of another. This chapter principally focuses on how by keeping at the centre paralysed, ageing, diseased, and immobile characters, the selected plays facilitate the audience to visualize America's shared paralysis. It is indeed a tight scrutiny of the economic, political, social, and cultural conditions prevalent in the country that contribute to human anguish and social menace, making brokenness and helplessness the everyday state of being.

Chapter 3, "Othered" and Alienated: Thematic Concerns, highlights how Arthur Miller's later drama is a vivid assortment of varied themes, all of which collectively address the condition of human "alienation" and "numbness". This chapter takes the discussion begun in Chapter 2 to a more minute examination of the various conditions prevalent in the American society that render its individual entities broken and traumatized. In its four different sections, the chapter expands the discussion to highlight human separateness at diverse levels. In the first, it investigates the problems related to "race" and "racism" while

in the second, it addresses “gender based alienation” that causes women’s trauma in developed societies. In the third subsection, it investigates the trauma and “otherness” caused by the distinctions of “class” and “status”—keeping the failure of American capitalism as its focal point. The last subsection of this chapter addresses the condition of estrangement amongst family members, which Arthur Miller portrays as a natural outcome of a numbed social environment. However, the interpersonal numbness being examined here focuses mainly on “marriage” as portrayed in Miller’s selected later plays.

Chapter 4, Dramatic Technique, is a detailed analysis of Miller’s technique of dramatic construction and presentation as seen employed in the selected plays. Beginning with how Arthur Miller creatively and symbolically names his characters and titles his plays to the poetic and practical elements of his “dialogue”, this chapter is a study of all aspects of the playwright’s technique of constructing stage plays. It includes a brief yet thorough analysis of stage props, characterization, costumes, and usage of “spotlight”—almost all essential features of Miller’s playwriting whose brilliance we experience in these later pieces of his canon.

Chapter 5 is a concluding discussion, reinstating the need to give these plays their due recognition and respect as important accomplishments of Miller’s writing span of over seventy years. It provides a brief summation to the discussions of this thesis’ previous chapters.

CONTENTS

Chapter 1

American Theatre and Arthur Miller: An Overview

The canon of American theatre is still an open-ended study for scholars and researchers. From its rather patchy beginnings, it has gradually acquired a recognizable shape in the twentieth century, and now holds an enormously important position in the dramatic literature of the world. To study American theatre is to study the history of America; looking at the two in exclusion will only lead to a faulty analysis as the evolution of the theatre of America is closely interwoven with the social, political, economic, and cultural growth of the nation itself.

> Of the three major cultures in North America after 1600, only white Europeans began with an itch for "theatre" as it is usually understood; Native Americans and Africans had institutionalized other modes of performance. A history of the American theatre limited to performances in a European language on a raised stage automatically excludes the performance traditions of many. (McConachie 111)

The Natives[i] of America, the aboriginals, were crushed by the European invaders in the 16th and 17th centuries. These Spanish and French invaders massively reduced the tribal populations, Christianised their rituals, and infiltrated their performance practices such as speechmaking and ritual dancing; they were indeed a "catastrophe for Indian populations and their cultures" (117-8). Most theatre historians agree that the earliest examples of Western theatrical literature in North America were written and performed by the Spanish and French colonists in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Despite various strenuous living conditions they encountered while trying to survive in the new land, the colonists managed to use theatre as a performance medium. They used performance practices in their everyday lives; the missionaries employed "Catholic rituals" and religious drama to convert the Natives (119). It is believed that the first European drama was performed in the American colonies in 1567 (119).

The Puritans began settling in the new colonies of America during the Great Migration (1620-40). To say that the Puritans were strongly opposed to theatre would be a rather misconstrued and hasty conclusion because like the Puritans themselves, even their likes and dislikes were varied (Davis 221). Many Puritan ministers were very well-read; they maintained personal libraries and read classical literature, which also included Greek

drama. Some of these ministers were themselves skilled actors and used theatrical practices and methods to attract more worshippers (220). However, the Puritans did not particularly encourage theatre as a mode of popular entertainment, and they had varied reasons for their aversion to it. They considered theatrical practice to be a sin against the will of God as it seemed to be challenging his "power to create character" (Wilmeth & Bigsby, *Vol-One* 2). Theatre to the Puritan was a futile activity, an "elitist waste of time", a wastage of hard earned money, a corrupt royalist institution, and a "potentially subversive activity" that could cause social and political unrest (Davis 221).

In analysing the Puritan censure of theatre in the American colonies, one needs to understand that between 1642-1660, theatres had a Puritan ban[ii] even in England. Evidently, most Puritans had migrated to the colonies with a very negative image of drama and performances of any sort. And when the injunction was finally lifted in 1660, the bawdiness of Restoration comedies worsened this negative impression further. As a result of this bias, theatre was banned in staunchly Puritan American colonies such as the Massachusetts Bay Colonies and Plymouth; and even in colonies where theatre was not completely banned, it faced constant hostility. However, it was not just its futility and bawdiness that irked the Puritan but the fact that theatre along with other entertainments such as "masques, court ritual, peasant revelry, and processions", bore the "stamp of pagan, pre-Christian belief and practice", caused hindrance in its growth (Buckley 428).

Susan Harris Smith, the author of *American Drama: The Bastard Art*, asserts that because Puritan censures extended to other literary forms as well, blaming them for American "drama's predicament" would be irrational (23). Smith believes that it is essential to pay attention to the various predispositions of American critics whose unfairness to drama defined popular tastes (23). Thus, passionately speaking for American drama's cause, Smith articulates:

> I argue that for several reasons American drama has been shelved out of sight: . . . because of a culturally dominant puritan distaste for and suspicion of the theatre . . . because of a persistent, unwavering allegiance to European models, slavish Anglophilia, and a predilection for heightened language cemented by the New Critics . . . because of a fear of populist, leftist, and experimental art; in part because of a disdain of alternative, oppositional, and vulgar performances . . . because of narrow disciplinary divisions separating drama from theatre and performance . . . because of the dominance of prose and poetry in the hierarchy of genres studied in university literature courses and reproduced in American criticism. (12)

Considering the opinions and analyses of these scholars, it may be concluded that there is no way one can absolutely understand as to why certain groups opposed or favoured theatrical performances. Yet, what remains to be appreciated and respected is that withstanding such step-fatherly treatment also, the theatre of America prevailed. The country had its first professional theatre built in 1716, in Williamsburg, Virginia, by a merchant named William Levingston, who imported actors and other artists from England to run his theatre. The Dock Street Theatre was built in Charleston in 1735. Levingston's theatre's struggles are evident from the fact that at one point of time, the playhouse was converted into a place for court hearings; it was the Court of Hustings in 1745 (Henderson. M 374).

Since it is the usual tendency of the colonist to bring with himself an identity that belongs to his motherland, most American colonists blindly aped the Londoners in their culture, modes of entertainment, and overall lifestyle. The dramatic standards set by the Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres of London were the benchmarks of theatrical performances in the American colonies. Hence, theatregoers to these forerunners of American playhouses constantly demanded for English actors and plays, thus making the smooth growth of an all-American theatre almost impossible.

> The Plays of Shakespeare, and Jonson, and Ford, and Marlowe, of Beaumont and Fletcher, of Wycherley, and all the old poets of the drama are ours, as much ours, being the descendants of Englishmen, as if our fathers had never left the country in which they were written. (Dunlap 89)

Some of the chief plays that entertained the colonies in the 1730s were all old London favourites like Farquhar's comedies, *The Recruiting Officer* and *The Beaux Stratagem*, George Lillo's, *The London Merchant*, and Susanna Centlivre's popular comedy, *The Busy Body*. Both the northern and southern audiences thoroughly enjoyed these English plays.

Androboros (1715), a political satire by Robert Hunter and Lewis Morris, is considered as the first play written and published in America. This three-act farce lampoons the political conspiracies that Hunter personally encountered during his administration as New York's colonial governor between 1710 and 1714 (Davis 226). The next printed play, *The Paxton Boys*, came out anonymously in 1764, which was "culmination of the American political dialogue", parodying a real happening of the preceding year (233). The play pioneered in introducing Indians as characters on stage (Wilmeth & Curley 38).

The Murray-Kean troupe was the first professional theatre company of some repute to visit the colonies in 1749. Headed by theatre managers, Walter Murray and Thomas Kean, the company presented Addison's *Cato* in Philadelphia. In New York, this troupe first performed at the Nassau Street Theatre, in 1750, opening with Shakespeare's *Richard III*. They visited the colonies with a complete troupe and performed a repertory that included some of Shakespeare's famous plays, John Dryden's *Love for Love*, John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, David Garrick's *The Lying Valet*, and Henry Fielding's *The Mock Doctor*. The Murray-Kean Playhouse opened in Williamsburg in 1751, commencing the "Virginia Company of Comedians", which presented plays in the colonies for the next twenty years.

The London Company of Comedians (later renamed The American Company/ The Old American Company), under the ownership of Lewis Hallam, an excellent comedian, arrived in the colonies in 1752, in Virginia. Armed with a repertory of twenty-four pieces, which were mostly Shakespearean plays, along with a handful of other London favourites, the Hallams set out to entertain America. The first play they presented in Virginia was Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, in the year 1752. For many years that followed, the Hallams staged for the colonies famous Shakespearean plays such as *Richard III*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*. Some other plays staged by this troupe were Joseph Addison's *Cato*, Dryden's *All for Love*, and some of Farquhar's popular comedies. Even though Hallams' troupe also performed in the northern colonies such as Philadelphia and New York, its survival was mostly dependent on the patronage of its southern male elites, who were mostly wealthy slave-owners of the south (McConachie 121-22). The company performed consistently in the colonies, except for twice when it had to flee out of the country during times of political unrest.

Thus for many years to come, the colonies were content watching Shakespearean revisions and some Restoration comedies; as a consequence, there was hardly any play which could be called purely American. On the whole, the colonists suffered a kind of Shakespeare-fixation and even devout colonists otherwise averse to theatre, appreciated the Elizabethan playwright (Miller.T 6). An amateur production of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1730 is often considered the first Shakespearean performance on the American stage, (Wilmeth & Curley 33). But most of what these audiences relished was not original Shakespeare, but rather "Shakespeare improved" (Shattuck xi). The Shakespearean plays staged in the colonies were usually "reworked"—the original language improved and plots and

characters tweaked to suit popular tastes (Miller.T 7). In terms of popularity, George Farquhar stood next to the bard (7); his plays such as *The Beaux Stratagem* (1707) and *The Recruiting Officer* (1706), were staged in the colonies in the early 1730s (Johnson & Burling 109).

The Stamp Act Crisis of 1765, marking the beginning of the revolutionary era that lasted till 1788, proved greatly detrimental to the growth of theatre in America, as it intensified an anti-British sentiment in the colonies. Theatres, widely viewed as British institutions, were thus recklessly crushed. During the Chapel Street Theatre riot of 1766, a mob "pulled down and burned" the Douglas' (previously only Hallam's) playhouse. (McConachie 127). The Republicans saw theatre as a "symbol of English tyranny, immoral luxury, and class division" (127), which forced Douglas's troupe to rename themselves as the "American Company"; but, since the playhouse thrived mostly on royal favours and patronage of governors, it was a point of extreme crisis for the company (127). Since professional players performing on stage became scarce during the revolutionary years, the chief form of drama in the nation were "amateur republican performance in the streets" (127).

Yet one important theatre landmark of the decade (1760s) was Thomas Godfrey's tragedy, *The Prince of Parthia*. Written originally in 1759, the play was produced by Douglas' troupe in 1767. Even though its staging turned out to be a miserable failure, today we know the play as the first American tragedy, and also as the first play written by an American-born author, performed in America by professional players (Davis 234). Inspired by Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*, Royal Tyler's *The Contrast* (1787) was the first comedy by a native American to be professionally produced in America (244).

By the 1770s, the sea voyages between London and the colonies reduced to weeks from months, which made it easier for plays and acting troupes to travel faster. For instance, Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*, which premiered in March 1773 in London, made its way to the American stage in August of the same year (Wilmeth & Bigsby *Vol-One* 7).

There was, however, a huge gap between the audiences of London and those of the colonies—the latter being more conservative in their tastes and general understanding of stage plays. This difference usually resulted in an overt opposition of theatre in the colonies, which, many a time, forced playhouses to advertise their plays as "moral lectures" or theatrical sermons (4).

In the history of American theatre, William Dunlap's contributions cannot be overlooked. Distinguished as an artist, historian, novelist, playwright, and theatre manager, Dunlap is often celebrated as the "father of American drama" (Davis 245). Trained as a painter in London, Dunlap began writing plays when he returned to America after completing his education. He wrote, produced, translated, and adapted several plays, thus, qualifying as America's "first professional playwright" (245). His first play, *The Modest Soldier*; or, *Love in New York*, was submitted to The American Company in 1787, but could not be produced. This theatre pioneer's writing career spanned around forty years; *The Father*; or *American Shandyism* (1789), *Darby's Return* (1789), *Andre* (1798), and *A Trip to Niagara; or, Travellers in America* (1828), are some of his well-known plays. Not only is Dunlap recognised as the first professional dramatist of America, but also as the first historian of American theatre. His volume, *A History of American Theatre* was published in 1832, in which Dunlap states that the "first efforts at dramatic literature" in America were certainly "wild" (90). These initial plays, which can be classified as "essays of youth, not sufficiently instructed in anything, and deficient in literary education", even though welcomed by the masses, had begun to feel the need for "a new state of existence" (90).

The years of the American Revolution (1765-83) were also immensely challenging for the growth of theatre, as most of the theatrical activity and, in fact, entertainment of any sort, were staunchly opposed during the war years. The biggest blow to theatrical advancement came when in 1774, the Continental Congress called on the States to discourage frivolous activities such as plays and other expensive diversions and entertainments (Smith 36). The American Company had to flee to Jamaica in 1775 (Wilmeth & Curley 42).

Most theatrical activity was banned during the Revolution, with few exceptions. Plays continued to be written, even if they were not getting a chance to be properly staged. Joseph Addison's *Cato*, a neoclassical tragedy, was the most performed play during the Revolution; thus a play which had ceased to be "fashionable" for its London audiences, was viewed in America as "an expression of the idealism of the day with themes of patriotism, liberty, virtue, and Roman fortitude" (Miller.T 10). *Cato* became an American favourite during the 1770s and remained quite popular in the later years also. With its "turgid and bombastic" language and its "political sentiments", the play was highly "idealized" by both Tories and Whigs (10). Since both political sides believed the play to be speaking of "their principles" (10), they emphatically promoted its performances.

George Washington ordered for its performance among his officers to keep their morale high (11). During this period of American drama's history, the contribution of women playwrights such as Mercy Otis Warren, Judith Sargent Murray, and English-born Susanna Haswell Rowson cannot be undervalued.

In the 1780s, theatre was banned in most American colonies and very few colonies such as Virginia, Maryland, and New York had legalised theatre (McConachie 129). The strong Republican wave in the country ensured that everyone thought of theatre as a corrupt influence. The American Company returned to New York in 1784 and began re-establishing itself in the new republic, but, unfortunately, much had changed in the country during the Revolution years: a majority of company's loyal audiences had left for London. In fact, even in the post-revolution phase, most theatre managers had to face extreme audience disinterest and opposition; the patriotic fervour of the masses made them suspicious of theatre. American Theatre was still a British institution.

The next decade (1790s), brought some respite to theatre companies as the Republican stress related to theatre relaxed a bit. Various large and small theatre troupes, filled with imported British actors, sprawled all over the towns of America. In its initial phase in the 18th century, theatre was primarily a highbrow activity, but now the audiences were mixed. Colonial playgoers who commonly believed that "only the genteel had the capacity for sentiment" now had to come to terms with reality—the Revolution had indeed "democratized gentility" (McConachie 138). There was a considerable increase in the women audiences as well, as many American wives and daughters went to watch plays, but still, American theatre was predominantly a very male-dominated institution. The most overriding plays in the newly liberated nation were still English by origin, and Shakespeare, Sheridan, and Farquhar were still the preferred playwrights; which can be attributed to America still bearing the weight of the Anglo-American conventions, living with a strong sense of post-colonial lowliness. With the election of George Washington as president in 1789, the new nation experienced its first period of political stability and reasonable economic growth. This secure environment in the country resulted in a relaxation of its harsh anti-theatre laws (Wilmeth & Bigsby 5).

In the early 19th century, gothic thrillers and domestic melodrama were widely appreciated in America (McConachie 140). Amongst the most common gothic thrillers were two imports from England: "*The Castle Spectre* by Matthew Gregory (Monk) Lewis, and *Blue Beard; or, Female Curiosity*, by George Coleman the Younger" (140).

The playwrights of gothic drama "typically mixed together elements of tragedy, romance, and melodrama" in order to transport audiences' response to an unconventional state where a "firm ethical judgment was impossible" (141).

By 1830, a lot of touring professional players had begun arriving from Europe to make profits in the American colonies (143). The industrial revolution of the nineteenth century considerably augmented the quantity and diversity of plays in the U.S theatre and "permanently altered its modes of production and reception" (147). Now, instead of an "all-purpose stock company of performing plays", the theatres in America were experimenting with different modes of entertainment such as "opera, pantomime, and variety acts in the same playhouse" with frequent visits from stars and circuses also (147). Theatre encountered the growth of novel genres such as "minstrelsy and burlesque" (147). This was also precisely the time when a strong star culture developed in the world of American theatre, as several big names from the London stage travelled to the colonies. Plays at this point of time were explicitly moulded to "fill the specific needs of star actors": the stars' influence, despite various sponsorships of playwriting contests, acted generally as an inhibiting force to the growth of independent playwrights" in America (Richardson 297). Sadly, the focus was people, and not plays.

A lot of new American playwrights had emerged in America, but still the most popular plays were those of Shakespeare, sprinkled with some popular Restoration drama. A strong Yankee tradition was also budding on the stage, as plays with Yankee characters were gaining immense popularity in the first half of the 19th century. *The Forest Rose* (1825) was "one of the earliest and most enduring" of the initial Yankee plays performed in America (McConachie 154). With the works of some prominent Yankee playwrights such as William Dunlap, Rowson, David Humphrey, Woodworth, and Barker, the Yankee theatre grew (Miller.T 49). Tyler's play, *The Contrast*, with its central character, Jonathan, assisted in defining the Yankee tradition on the American stage. Jonathan, the country boy from New England, gradually turned out to be the most emulated Yankee character in America; he, indeed was the image of the American "common man" on stage (45). The audiences loved Yankee characters as they seemed to be embodying some rudimentary characteristics of the American personality: "they were rural, shrewd, honest, and hard-dealing but fair", and hence, admired by both English and American audiences as portrayals of "democratic experiment" (45). David Humphreys' *The Yankey in England* (1815) was deeply inspired by Tyler's *The Contrast*.

Since theatre audiences now were of mixed classes, the playwrights and theatre managers faced an increased pressure of serving the tastes of both, at the same time. Farces and comic operas such as those of David Garrick, had still not lost their popularity among the American masses. To change a completely British institution into American, was a highly demanding and "slow process" (49), as plays written and performed by native-born Americans were still few and far between. American theatre still looked at the plays being performed at Drury Lane and Covent Garden as its standard benchmarks and Shakespearean drama still ruled the country (49). America was in need of a literature of their own, away from the influences of the Europeans, but the challenge remained that both pioneer American playwrights and their audiences had not yet "matured their notions of the result of the great political changes" that were constantly taking place around them (Dunlap 90).

As the new century unfolded, there was a gradual shift towards middle class characters in a lot of plays, as opposed to the old plays which showed only rich and aristocratic characters in central roles. This certainly had to do something with the election of Andrew Jackson as the president of America in 1823; Jackson's image and strategy supported the common men, and not the affluent (Richardson 268). The new president of America sought "political support" in the common American, instead of obliging the "wealthy and cultured classes" (Miller.T 57). The changing economic environment and the new wave of romanticism in arts had a deep impress on the country's theatre also, marking a further departure from the traditional stock companies to a reinforcement of the star-culture (58).

As a theatrical style, melodrama, whose origins lay in France, ruled the 19th century American stage with great popularity and strength. Melodrama facilitated "the illiterate playgoer" to understand and appreciate a play as clearly as any other class of audience (Wilmeth & Bigsby, *Vol Two* 3). These plays, with exaggerated characters and sensational plots, served the popular American taste very well, but it was saddening that "dramatic characters were not based on life but on other characters" (Miller.T 93). America's obsession with melodrama is often attributed to the sensational stories people read in newspapers; the rise of the penny-press had made newspapers easily reachable and affordable for the common masses (92). Now people demanded on stage the same "lively and saucy" stories they were being supplied through newspapers (93). Mrs. Malaprop of

Sheridan's *The Rivals* and Mrs. Tiffany of Anna Cora Mowatt's play, *Fashion* (1845), were, among others, two immensely popular characters on the American stage.

Tired of unproductive and stagnant activities of the American theatre, in 1845, Walt Whitman and Edgar Allan Poe, openly argued for the need to reform American drama, demanding American plays to be natural, real, original, and of course, more American. Though in wanting so, these writers were quite ahead of their time (93), their frustrations and disappointments were quite justified—there was not a single American play of the period that could even closely match the prowess and originality of classic American novels, *Moby Dick* and *The Scarlet Letter*.

In the 1850s, the country divided into pro-slavery and anti-slavery camps, moved towards a Civil-War (1861-65). The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe to write her novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in serial form, between 1851 and 1852, which not only became a best-seller, but is also famously known to have laid the chief foundation for the American Civil-War. The novel's dramatized versions were exceptionally successful on the American stage.

A romantic melodrama, *La Dame aux Camélias* (1852), concerning the "life and death of a courtesan" by Alexandre Dumas *fils* (104), originally published as a novel in 1848, was another very famous "native drama" produced in the same decade. Dion Boucicault, an Irish-born London playwright was the most renowned and efficacious "practitioner of sensational melodrama" in the 1850s and 60s (McConachie 165). Boucicault had attained "early fame" among the London audiences with his comic play, *London Assurance*, which opened on the American stage in 1841 (Miller.T 106). His 1857 play, *The Poor of New York*, was an adaptation of a French melodrama. Boucicault also dramatized some of Charles Dickens' famous works such as *Nicholas Nickelby* and *Cricket on the Hearth*, which helped him attain huge commercial success (110).

Augustin Daly, another writer of melodrama, became very popular for his social melodramas, in which he "practiced and perfected" the methods used by Boucicault, Daly continued his success story to the post-Civil War era (110). His experience as a journalist helped him create sensational plots for the stage as he grasped public tastes very well. *Under the Gaslight* (1867) and *Divorce* (1871), were some of Daly's best known works. The melodramas Daly penned "linked primitive emotion to domestic duty", demonstrating that women "were capable of the most untamed passion when family and/or motherhood was at stake" (McConachie 166). Daly later started his own theatre company.

According to most theatre historians such as Arthur Hornblow, American drama had almost ceased to exist by the 1870s, as the stage was mostly occupied by foreign imports (Wilmeth & Bigsby, *Vol-Two* 1). The theatre of America, unlike the American novel, bore no "direct and organic relationship" with the American society; it was merely a "source of distraction, entertainment, and amusement" for the masses (2).

> Poetry had its Emerson, Whitman, Longfellow, Whittier, and Lowell, and Cooper, Irving, Hawthorne, Melville, and Thoreau explored aspects of their own society through prose, looking for a central metaphor to capture the essence of a new world of fact and imagination. But for the most part all the theatre could boast, besides foreign imports, translations and adaptations, was melodrama. (2)

A massive change was urgently needed to mark the significance of theatre as an institution in America.

The realist movement originated in Europe and then gradually travelled to the American stage. The extraordinary pieces of "Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, Anton Chekhov, Hermann Sudermann, Gerhart Hauptmann", and George Bernard Shaw, somehow managed to find in America a small audience for themselves (Miller.T 136). This new movement encouraged other playwrights of the time to address the country's social, cultural, political, and economic issues through their plays and to take the stage as close to real life as possible. But this was certainly not an easy or quick transformation—the majority was still happy with senseless and shallow plays. Even when the playwrights wanted to change these trends, people, being too content with sensational plots and happy endings, were not yet ready.

American writers such as William Dean Howells and Hamlin Garland constantly argued in favour of abandoning romanticism and melodrama altogether and presenting in literature and on stage American life as it really was (137). In the 1880s also, romanticism was a dominant genre on the American stage. A few glimpses of realism in terms of plot and characters were intermittently visible, but nothing very substantial could be seen on stage. For example, the plays of Steele MacKaye and Denman Thompson did manipulate the romantic plots using some realist techniques, but certainly these playwrights dared not present their plays in a full-blown realist fashion. Staging plays by Ibsen or Shaw for an unprepared audience meant high stakes.

There was definitely a section of upper-class intellectuals in America, who had an appreciation for European dramatists such as Henrik Ibsen. These were precisely those who frequented Europe very regularly and watched Ibsen's plays there, but they were a very

small minority in America. Ibsen was introduced to the American audiences in 1882, through some amateur productions of his plays. *A Doll's House*, produced by Richard Mansfield, opened to awfully brutal reviews by both audiences and critics: the critics completely condemned the character of Nora, finding her too controversial and corrupt for the society. Other Ibsen plays such as *Ghosts* and *Hedda Gabler* were also severely rejected by the American masses. A very strong campaigner of Ibsenism, playwright, George Bernard Shaw faced a similar hostility in America. So, it is very clear that American playwrights who dared to venture into this unchartered territory called realism, had to do so without bothering about commercial success; as only a niche audience would be interested in their work.

James A. Herne was an early realist of the American stage. In the '80s and '90s, Herne churned out several realist plays such as *Margaret Fleming* (1891) and *Shore Acres* (1893), which are now counted as very important American contributions to the realist movement. Herne collaborated on a lot of projects with another contemporary playwright, David Belasco, whose name emerges quite prominently in any discussion of the state of the American theatre towards the end of the 19th century. Many of Belasco's plays were French adaptations. He teamed up with Henry C. De Mille also, and it was only after the success of his 1895 play, *The Heart of Maryland*, that Belasco emerged as an independent theatre manager and playwright.

Another very important playwright of the 1890s who took realism to a more regional level was Augustus Thomas. He captured the locales of America in his plays such as *Alabama* (1891), *In Mizzoura* (1893), and *Arizona* (1899). Despite having made much progress in terms of inclusion of native characters, plots, scenes, and hues, the theatre of America still could not stand out as did American novel and poetry.

By 1896, the American stage was dominated by the Theatrical Syndicate, a commercial control on plays and playwrights. Under the main leadership of Charles Frohman, a theatre businessman, the syndicate suppressed individual voices: playwrights had to be commercially successful to be favoured and promoted. This certainly was not a very positive phase for the overall growth of American drama, as it demanded the "unique" to be commercially powerful first (Miller.T 176). The Syndicate deteriorated after the death of Charles Frohman in 1915 and its authority was challenged by the Shubert brothers, who defended art over commerce.

The Little Theatre Movement began in Europe in 1887 when Andre Antoine established an experimental theatre company in Paris. The movement inspired American theatre around 1911-1912 and was a collective effort of young theatre specialists, dramaturges, stage technicians, stage designers, and actors, who were inspired by the various advancements of European theatre. Its fundamental motive was a departure from commercialism and profit-oriented attitudes towards art and theatre. The movement inspired independence and creative newness, and aimed at doing away with melodrama and romanticism in plays. Thus, this new wave resulted in the proliferation of many small and independent theatres across the American towns. Provincetown Players, Washington Square Players, and Neighbourhood Playhouse, were some of the prominent small groups, which promoted native talent, thus revolutionising American drama. These "art theatres" of America were mainly "amateur" play groups establishing a substitute to the Broadway "show shops" (Frick 223). The Little Theatre Movement served to provide experimental centres for the dramatic arts—free from the standard production contrivances of the mainstream commercial theatres. The American theatre had finally begun to catch up with the terrific advances that European theatre had been making since the 1870s.

Consequently, the early 20th century American theatre encountered two opposing forces: the commercial centre of all creative activities (Broadway) and these little experimental theatres. The mainstream American theatre in the 1910s mostly featured light comedies and melodramas, characterized by a kind of pseudo-realism. Many women playwrights such as Martha Morton, Lottie Blair Parker, Lillian Mortimer, and Rida Johnson Young, contributed plays to both commercial and little theatres.

The year 1915 happened to be a major turning point for the growth of American drama as it witnessed the formation of The Provincetown Players. Arthur Miller, an important 20th century playwright, was born in the same year. The Provincetown Players launched playwright Eugene Gladstone O'Neill, who is rightly called the father of twentieth century American drama. O'Neill is often "evoked as the transitional playwright bringing American drama into respectability" (Smith 99). *Bound East for Cardiff* was his first-produced play, opening at the Wharf Theatre in Provincetown, in July 1916. Playwright Susan Glaspell was also a part of the same theatre group.

O'Neill was the main conduit through whom the inspirations of Europe would be let loose upon the American stage, and his potent plays would act as the main training school for all of the major playwrights who would later follow. Dramatists such as

Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller and, a generation later, Edward Albee, showed influence of O'Neill's plays in their works.

Expressionism, a modernist theatre movement, arose in Europe, chiefly in Germany, a little before the First World War. Inspired chiefly by painting, the movement focused on bringing upon the dramatic stage and in writing the countless inner experiences, instead of the outer forms. German playwrights, Oskar Kokoschka, Ernst Toller, and Georg Kaiser, attempted to depict in their plays an external expression of inner conflicts. O'Neill's plays, *The Emperor Jones* (1920) and *The Hairy Ape* (1922) are considered to be the first glimpses of Expressionism on the American stage, even though O'Neill never accepted this movement's influence on his works. The success of *The Hairy Ape* ushered a trend of modernist expressionist drama in America, which continued in the 1920s. Some other American plays of the same times such as Susan Glaspell's *The Verge* (1921), Elmer Rice's *The Adding Machine* (1923) and John Howard Lawson's *Roger Bloomer* (1923), are also some classic examples of this style.

The post-Depression years (1930s) witnessed the growth of the leftist theatre, and also the government's attempt at employing artists and playwrights through the Federal Theatre Project, which eventually failed. By 1933, half of New York's theatres had died, but this did not stop the evolution of American theatre.

The American stage, hence, was well set for new playwrights. The age of melodrama was past, and the little theatres had shown young playwrights a path of inspiration and creativity. Arthur Miller wrote his first stage play, *No Villain*, in 1935, while still at Michigan University. Eugene O'Neill was awarded a Nobel Prize in literature in 1936, thus, becoming the first American playwright to receive this honour. American dramatic literature was finally evolving substantially, taking promising shape.

Arthur Miller: Life and Works

Arthur Asher Miller (1915-2005), was a prominent American playwright whose written harvest has been spectacularly enormous and extensive. In the history of American drama, he holds a formidable position today, and is one of the most performed playwrights of the 21st century.

Other greats of twentieth century American drama such as Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams, didn't live long enough to see the birth of the new century like Miller did. His writing career spanned an approximate of over seventy years, beginning with his

first stage play, *No Villain*, written in the spring of 1935, when he was a university student at Michigan. Arthur Miller was writing practically till the very end of his life. In his lifetime, his literary output included numerous plays for the stage and the radio, screenplays for film and television, theatre essays, a couple of short-stories, a children's story book, an autobiography, some non-fiction works, two novellas, and a novel. The playwright passed away in 2005, and his ironically titled play, *Finishing the Picture*, produced in October 2004, remains as his last play—written, produced, and published.

Born on October 17, 1915, in New York City, Arthur Miller was the second child of Isadore and Gittel Miller. His parents, both Jewish by origin, already had a three-year-old son, Kermit, when their second son was born. His sister, Joan, born in 1922, grew up to become a renowned theatre actor. Miller's grandparents on both sides were Jews of Polish origin, and his parents, though both mostly non-observant Jews, took great pride in their Jewish traditions and culture. Both Arthur and Kermit received basic Jewish education, mainly on their grandparents' insistence, as their own parents were not particularly religious. Miller's father, Isadore Miller owned a manufacturing house called the Miltex Coat and Suit Company and ran his own clothing factory, employing over eight hundred people (Abbotson, *Critical* 3).

This fair luxury that Arthur Miller was born into, he and his family continued to enjoy until the Wall Street Crash of 1929, which rendered his father penniless. The Millers were thus forced to move away from a very posh Manhattan house to a much inferior Brooklyn neighbourhood. Miller, a teenager back then, watched his family, like most other American families at that point, struggle in the aftermath of the Crash, and it is this episode of his formative years that left a deep impression on Arthur Miller, both as a person and author. Seeing his father's well-established business fail, Miller grew up with a deep-rooted fear of ruin; he could never comfortably accept the failure of his plays. The harsh and ugly memories of these years made him aware of the consequences of financial failure to such an extent that even in his old age, he could recollect every minute financial detail of his younger life. According to his sister, Joan, Miller always carried "scars" from that period of their lives, which stayed intact in his "memory, in his nerves, and in his muscles"; he could never really rid himself of the effect (Gottfried 15). This helped him sympathize with those who were abused by capitalism—with people who found themselves "used up and discarded" (Meyers 119). According to Miller, this period of his country's history was a time of great "transformation" as it changed America's character forever, fostering interminably an environment based on "cynicism and distrust", thus marking "the loss of

American innocence" (Abbotson, *Critical* 474). A poignant picture of the Crash has been depicted in his play, *The American Clock*.

As far as Miller's educational background was concerned, his father was barely literate, but his mother received education enough to qualify as a school teacher. The playwright attended the same elementary school that his mother attended as a child (4). It was his mother who took him to his first Broadway play, a melodrama; but by his own admission, he was more interested in "cowboy movies and adventure serials" at that point of time (Gottfried 9). Because of the huge financial damage done by the Crash, his parents had no money to fund his college education. And also because he never scored very well at school, he had no records or grades to boast of, which made it further difficult for him to pursue higher education. He applied to the University of Michigan, where his application was initially rejected, and was only conditionally accepted later by the Dean; as Miller's letter of request, promising sincerity and serious intent had been able to affect a change in the Dean's decision (Abbotson, *Critical* 5). At college, he had to support himself through odd jobs to pay his living and tuition, and he was even forced to work at an automobile parts warehouse to earn some money on the side. Later, he picked small jobs at his university as well: the playwright washed dishes in the college cafeteria to support himself.

Once at Michigan, Miller found a plethora of opportunities and options opening up for him. It was here that he got to know about the famous Avery Hopwood Awards in Creative Writing, which gave budding young writers good cash prizes and also a fair amount of recognition. The cash prize encouraged Miller to try his hand at playwriting and thus he penned down his first play, *No Villain*, which won the Hopwood Award in 1935. *No Villain* was a deeply autobiographical play, showing at its centre an American family, much like Miller's own, suffering amidst the economic crisis in America. He won a $250 cash prize for the play, which was a huge relief for him as it helped him pay for his tuition.

Unlike in his school years, Miller was a more dynamic and receptive student at college, and considered majoring in journalism. He worked as a junior reporter, and later as an editor for the Michigan Daily, but eventually dropped journalistic pursuits, and instead took up English Literature. The environment at Michigan stimulated Miller's creative instincts and helped him emerge as a budding radical. He joined the left-wingers, and became actively involved in campus politics; in fact, to "be a radical was almost conventional" at Miller's college campus (Gottfried 31).

Even though the cash prize had been Miller's chief interest in writing his first play, he now felt assured that he could write more plays. He rewrote *No Villain* as *They Too*

Arise, keeping the main story much the same. If the previous version simply seemed to be defending the "innocent victims of the Wall Street debacle", *They Too Arise* was a certainly more "militant" version, speaking for young Americans who just needed to "right the wrongs that caused it" (32). He sent this play to the Theatre Guild's Bureau of New Plays Competition, where it ended up winning a cash prize of $1250, and also became his first performed play in the university's theatre. *Honors at Dawn* is another of his university plays, which is also a sort of revision of *No Villain*. All these early plays written at Michigan were revisions of the same story, written in first draft—all invariably demonstrating a sort of Marxist commitment.

Encouraged by his success with the Hopwood Awards, Arthur Miller took a playwriting course in Michigan, conducted and taught by Prof. Kenneth Thorpe Rowe. *The Jackson Prison Play*, later renamed *The Great Disobedience*, was an attempt on his part to find the most civil way of fighting against the atrocities of the existing American system. It was probably the most well-researched of his university plays, and also his first play that wasn't "autobiographical" (43), but it failed to get Miller a Hopwood first prize, marking the young writer's first defeat at the prestigious competition.

In June 1938, Arthur Miller received his Bachelor's degree in Arts and Literature from the University of Michigan, where he had laid the foundation of his creative journey as a playwright. To him, this university degree held little value in comparison to the fact that in the process of this formal education, he had indeed discovered his calling for life. For Miller's personal life as well, Michigan proved to be a major landmark, for it was here that he met his first wife, Mary Grace Slattery, a young student of psychology, who wished to become a social worker, and also shared many of Miller's own political views.

A few months after his graduation, Arthur Miller was offered a minor scriptwriting job of $250 per week, but he found it better to turn it down; he could not consider this as a serious writing opportunity. In one of his conversations with Christopher Bigsby, Miller stated exactly why he thought better to turn the offer down:

> They offered me a job and I just couldn't think of doing that because the movies then, despite the legends that have grown up since, were junk. They were known as junk. They were made to be junk. They've now become classics. They're classic junk. Anyway, I didn't want to do that. I had higher ambitions.
>
> (Bigsby, *Arthur Miller* 145)

Thus, from the very start of his writing career, Arthur Miller was quite sure that he wished to bring about a change through his work and he had no desire of merely entertaining

America. There was a creative surety with which he had left Michigan, and hence he continued revising his old plays adamantly, and also penned down several new ones. With a special letter of recommendation from his mentor, Prof. Rowe, Miller joined the Federal Theatre Project, which was set up as part of President Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration (WPA), with the soul objective of providing employment and assistance to the struggling artists during the difficult Depression years. Miller had barely spent six months with the project when it was shut down completely in 1939, fearing some sort of communist infiltration. In the meanwhile, he kept struggling with playwriting and also tried his hand at short-story writing and radio plays. He was constantly on the lookout for producers to get his plays staged, but usually without much success.

For almost two years after leaving college, Miller did not have a regular writing income and was mostly supported by his father and brother, who themselves were struggling with failing finances. During these two years, working from the basement of his father's house, Miller happened to lose the gusto with which he had left college, and found developing in himself a strong guilt of letting his brother struggle, while he experimented freely with his career. His stage plays faced constant rejection from producers; Broadway seemed to be a distant dream now. In these two years, he had completely isolated himself, and now once again felt the need to experience everyday life. He decided to travel more and base his plays on his experiences. Miller married Mary Slattery in 1940.

Though Arthur Miller faced enormous difficulty in getting his theatre plays staged, as a radio dramatist, he found things to be relatively easier. The first radio piece that he managed to sell was *Joe, the Motorman*, which Miller himself considered "junk" written in order to get an income (Gottfried 52); a bunch of his other radio plays such as *William Ireland's Confession*, were also aired. He even adapted Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* for radio. Yet, despite his success, Miller was never completely content with his work for the mainstream commercial radio as he was strongly averse to the pressures exerted by networks and their advertisers. In this duration, he penned down numerous short-stories, which he kept sending to various magazines and publishing houses, usually without any positive response. It was after Miller became a successful playwright that he produced a collection of his short-stories titled, *I Don't Need You Anymore* (1967).

It was in the November of 1944 that Arthur Miller could finally have his first Broadway production with *The Man Who Had All The Luck*, which was an adaptation of his rejected novel with the same name. The play was based on the life of Mary Slattery's "rich and successful" Ohio cousin who hanged himself to death at the age of twenty-eight

(Meyers 121). Even though it was honoured with the Theatre Guild National Award, the play brought Miller no luck on Broadway. Evidently dejected by his failure on stage, the young playwright even thought of abandoning playwriting altogether; even though he was emerging as a very successful radio dramatist at the same time.

Miller's only published novel, *Focus* (1945), was one of the pioneer works on anti-Semitism in America. It became a bestseller, selling around 90,000 copies in hardback in America alone, and was widely translated, exported and circulated (Bigsby, *Critical* 76). *Focus* was also later made into a Hollywood movie. The novel offers an intense description of the obstacles faced by American Jews in the prejudiced employment scenario of their country. Sheltered by the luxury and social status of his parents, Arthur Miller never had any significant anti-Semitic encounters in his childhood years, but later in life, he observed and felt this prejudice very closely. According to Bigsby, *Focus* "was in many ways an act of courage" on the playwright's part (*Critical* 75). Indeed, poor were the chances that Miller's "message from the underground would be embraced" (75); yet, Miller emerged as an efficacious novelist. This sudden success could have encouraged Miller to continue as a novelist but even while finishing this novel, he was already planning his next play (76). Miller was naturally inclined towards the "dynamic and public nature" of theatre (Gottfried 90).

Arthur Miller spent a number of years developing *All My Sons* (1947), previously titled, *The Sign of the Archer*, a play based on war-profiteering, which was quite a controversial subject in the post Second World War era. When the play finally opened, the war was over, yet the issues raised by Miller remained "relevant" (Bigsby, Critical 76). With the production of this play, he had his first taste of Broadway accomplishment. Running for around 328 performances, the play fetched him some major awards, critical approval, along with his first interview for *New York Times*. Arthur Miller, now on financially stable grounds, still chose to work for a week at a beer-box factory, "assembling boxes for minimum wage"; he did this both out of a need to contribute and to not lose "touch with real people" (Abbotson, *Critical* 10).

After the success of *All My Sons,* Miller found the courage to offer to the American audience a play with a more "risky" subject (130). The tremendous success of *Death of a Salesman* (1949) strongly established the playwright as an important theatre voice, exercising a formidable social and political influence. Miller's *Salesman* was performed throughout the United States and Europe and was an instant hit, winning him various major awards, including the Pulitzer Prize, the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, the

Theater Club Award, and the Tony Award. It also had the distinction of being the only play to have ever featured for circulation on the Book of the Month Club (Abbotson, *Critical* 11).

In the year 1950, right after two consecutive Broadway hits, people expected Miller to hit a hat-trick with another stage play, but he decided instead to adapt Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*, condensing Ibsen's five acts into two. The adaptation was accused of creating an anti-US propaganda and was closed after only thirty-six performances. It was in 1951 when Miller was busy checking the film production of *Salesman*, that he was introduced to Marilyn Monroe, through his friend and theatre director, Elia Kazan. Arthur Miller was still married to Mary Slattery.

In 1953, Miller drew a parallel between the infamous Salem witch trials of the seventeenth century and the HUAC (House Un-American Activities Committee) trials of the 1950s. The playwright had refused to "name names" before the HUAC, unlike his close friend Elia Kazan, and was thus held for contempt. Though he was never really blacklisted by the HUAC, two of his film-scripts were rejected and there was some active campaigning against his stage plays by various "patriotic" groups. Arthur Miller used the dramatic medium to express his anger and dissatisfaction at such public proceedings in the McCarthy era. He researched the Salem witch trials in 1952, at the Historical Society of Salem; *The Crucible* premiered in 1953, in New York City. Even though *The Crucible* is one of Arthur Miller's most performed plays, its initial reviews were quite disappointing. The play won the Tony and Donaldson Awards in the best play category.

A View from the Bridge and *A Memory of Two Mondays* were produced as double-bill in 1955, and both ran poorly. The intriguing story of Italian longshoremen and immigrants was first produced as a one-act version and was later revised into two acts. Having separated from his first wife, Miller married Monroe in 1956. For a while, it seemed to be that perfect match between beauty and brains, but eventually this union began showing major cracks as Monroe was massively dependent on drugs and alcohol; Miller found himself incapable to help her situation.

Thus distressed with personal issues, Miller experienced a sort of creative slump. During these low years, he continued writing short-stories and essays. Several of his plays were adapted as films, mostly produced abroad. To reinvigorate his depressed wife's interest in acting, Miller adapted his short-story, *The Misfits*, as a film script, which was ready in 1961. But, unfortunately, the couple decided to part ways in the same year. In 1962, the playwright married Inge Morath, a professional photographer he and Monroe had

met on the sets of *The Misfits*. Just six months after this new marriage, Monroe died of drug-overdose.

In 1964, Arthur Miller produced two new plays about the Holocaust: *An Incident at Vichy* and *After the Fall*, the former of which depicted the roundup of Jews in Vichy, France, during the Second World War. *After the Fall* had acquired its final shape in 1961 but opened on stage in 1964, capturing maximum attention for being viewed as Miller's attempt to cope with his inner turmoil in the post-Monroe era. Both audiences and critics found a striking likeness between the female lead of the play, Maggie, and Marilyn Monroe, but, despite being much talked about, the play was a fiasco on the dramatic stage.

The 1960s kept the playwright quite engaged in his political activities as he spoke vehemently against the Vietnam War. Miller had the honour of being chosen the president of PEN (Poets, Essayists, and Novelists) in 1965. He attended his first PEN conference in Yugoslavia in the same year. *The Price* (1968) premiered in New York, once again bringing the old Miller family theme to the centre stage. The play ran for 429 performances, becoming his most successful play since the *Salesman*.

In the 1970s also, Miller continued experimenting with new dramatic forms, but American critics remained unhappy with his work and social propaganda. Miller's career as a playwright was on hold during this whole time. He produced a short play, *The Reason Why*, which came along with another one-act play, *Fame*. In 1971, Miller was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. *The Creation of the World and Other Business* (1972), based on the book of Genesis, depicted the human capacity for violence, with a special reference to the revolts of the 1960s and the brutality of the Vietnam War. He tried his hand at this play's musical version, *Up from Paradise*, staged at Ann Arbor in 1974. Based on his experiences at PEN, Miller wrote *The Archbishop's Ceiling* (1977)—this being his attempt to condemn the political control imposed on writers. The play depicts a group of writers, trying to survive against various threats of suppression.

The 1980s was also a busy decade for the playwright. He ventured into television, a medium that he had not yet used for his works. A bunch of other plays such as *The American Clock*, *Playing For Time*, *Some Kind of Love Story* were produced; most of these being short plays. The later part of the decade gave people the playwright's take on his own life with the publication of his autobiography, *Timebends: A Life* (1987). In the same year, Miller produced two more one-act plays as double-bill, titled, *Danger: Memory*; both *I Can't Remember Anything* and *Clara* are one-act plays based on the themes of old age and memories.

The 1990s brought Arthur Miller back to some active participation in cinema. He self-adapted his play, *The Crucible* as a movie. The 1990 movie, *Everybody Wins* was a screenplay by the playwright, based on his play, *Playing for Time*. He penned several other plays during the decade. His three consecutive plays on marriage, commonly referred to as the "damaged wives' series" (Scanlan 182): *The Ride down Mt. Morgan* (1991), *The Last Yankee* (1993), and *Broken Glass* (1994), were all products of this decade.

The Ride Down Mt. Morgan, which is a sort of exploration of subjects such as bigamy and infidelity in the current scenario, premiered in 1991 in London; it premiered in America in 1996, finding relatively better reviews here. *The Last Yankee*, set in a state mental hospital, was first produced off-Broadway in 1991, in its single scene version. Its two-scene version premiered to mixed reviews in 1993, in New York City; the play shows America as a culture in denial. The last in the series, *Broken Glass*, set in Brooklyn of 1938, opened in America in 1994 to fairly mixed reviews and is an allusion to the Nazi *Kristallnacht*[iii]. The play essays the impact of brutality and hatred on individual psyche and is considered one of Miller's best works expressing his Jewish concerns.

In 1992, Miller published *Homely Girl: A Life*, a collection of three stories. The novella was published in the UK as *Plain Girl*, and years later was made into a movie called *Eden* (2001). In the same year (1992), the First International Arthur Miller Conference was held at Millersville University in Pennsylvania. In 1993, the playwright was awarded with the National Medal of the Arts by President Bill Clinton. The Second International Arthur Miller Conference was held in 1995 when the Arthur Miller Society was founded.

Mr. Peters' Connections premiered in America in 1998 and in London in the year 2000, and shows as its central character an elderly man, a former Pan Am Pilot, caught somewhere between alertness and sleep, and life and death, struggling hard to find the meaning of his life. The year 2000 also saw the publication of Miller's essay collection, *Echoes Down the Corridor,* underlining his thoughts on various social and political topics and issues. His satirical play, *Resurrection Blues,* produced in 2002, is a commentary on the kind of government active in the South of America and America's interference and corrupt politics in the several South and Central American countries such as El Salvador and Columbia.

Inge Morath passed away in 2002 and Kermit Miller, Arthur Miller's elder brother, passed away the next year. The playwright's final theatre play, *Finishing the Picture* premiered at the Goodman Theatre, Chicago in 2004. Based on Miller's experiences while filming *The Misfits,* the play can be viewed as a satire. Another novella called *The*

Turpentine Still, published in Southwest Review in 2004, is one of Miller's final published works.

Arthur Miller died of heart failure, at his Roxbury home, on February 10, 2005, at eighty-nine years of age. "Beavers", his short-story, published in Harper's magazine, is the playwright's last published work while alive. Roxbury, Connecticut, announced May 7, 2005 to be the town's first official Arthur Miller Day.

The Playwright Influenced

Arthur Miller is often applauded as one of the most influential playwrights of the twentieth century yet little attention is paid to what and who influenced his playwriting. In any discussion pertaining to literary influences on Arthur Miller's plays and his writing style, Miller's researchers, critics, and biographers often point out the influence of the Greek dramatists and other distinguished dramatists of the world such as William Shakespeare, Henrik Ibsen, Eugene O'Neill, Clifford Odets, and Tennessee Williams, and some popular theatre movements such as Expressionism and Realism.

In his book, *American Drama of the Twentieth Century*, Gerald Berkowitz refers to Realism as "the natural voice of American drama" since it is this genre that audiences can most "relate and respond to" (2). The realist movement started in Europe in the 1870s and 80s, but for America, it took a few more years to practice the new convention. Right from his university days, Miller found inspiration in the works of August Strindberg, Anton Chekov, Henrik Ibsen, and Clifford Odets. Miller's 1999 theatre essay, "Notes on Realism", throws light on how he personally perceived this theatrical style as a dramaturge. He agrees that "realism" was the "reigning style" in both America and Britain when he began writing plays in the 1930s (Miller, *Echoes* 301). Throwing light on this essay, Susan Abbotson states that according to Miller, Realism "is more complex than many would allow" as it certainly "provides the bedrock for much of what can be deemed positive in U.S. theater" (*Critical* 258). In another of his essays, "The Family in Modern Drama", Miller asserts that just like Symbolism and Expressionism, even Realism is a "style, an artful convention" and therefore, must never be seen as a "piece of reportage" (*Collected Essays*[iv] 93). Its importance is exemplified in the fact that despite being seen as a "familiar bore", it has not been replaced by any other "succinct form" for theatrical presentation. In Miller's opinion, even O'Neill's plays, especially those which have family and family relations at their centre, cannot escape the clutches of Realism.

It is apparent that even though the playwright talks about Realism as a dominant style in American theatre, he detests both its misinterpretation by people and their fixation to it. However, many of Miller's own plays are predominantly realistic; he admits to the reader that his first play, *No Villain*, written in 1935, and revised many times after that, was undeniably a "mimetic" effort on his part as he portrayed his own family in it (Miller, *Echoes* 303). But, despite the strong influence of this style on his works, Arthur Miller didn't particularly like his writing to be viewed as "realistic"; he rather saw himself as an interpreter of reality (Abbotson, *Student* 24).

As is clear from his notes, dramatic realism to Miller was not about reporting everyday events on stage; instead, it was more like a set of systematically arranged conventions played out using the dramatic medium (Miller, *Echoes* 305). He discourses about how even the poetically stylized plays by O'Neill, Tennessee Williams', and Odets, passed as "realistic" in those days, because people felt an intense need to label artistic works (305-6); he found this mislabelling both bizarre and unnecessary because according to him:

> . . .whether a play strives for straight realism or for some more abstracted style, with the very act of condensation the artificial enters even as the first of its lines is being written. The only important question is the nature of that artificiality and how it is acknowledged by the play . . .. (301)

Expressionism had managed to reach the American stage through the plays of Eugene O'Neill, along with those of few others such as Elmer Rice and Sophie Treadwell. Miller also experimented a lot with this genre, mixing it with Realism. Miller's preliminary education in German Expressionism came from his college playwriting class taught by Prof. Kenneth T. Rowe. His university play, *The Great Disobedience*, can be seen as his early attempt at the style (Gottfried 122). The same dramatic style is strongly visible in his most celebrated play, *Death of a Salesman*. The workings of the human mind have been dramatized in a lot of his other plays also: a good example is his 1955 play, *The Crucible*, in which the moral crisis of a society is clearly demonstrated through the infamous Salem witch trials of the 17th century. One of Miller's later plays, *An Elegy for a Lady*, based on one of his short stories, employs the expressionistic techniques to "dramatize the workings of the human mind" (417). Brenda Murphy in her essay, "Arthur Miller: Revisioning Realism", states that Arthur Miller's whole writing career from *Death of a Salesman* onwards can be viewed as a persistent trialling with realistic and expressionistic forms of drama. According to Murphy, Miller's later plays echo the expressionistic style as there is

a consciously created disconnected, bouncy, and rather unrealistic portrayal in these works; it is neither completely real nor surreal (198).

Prof. Rowe in his book, *Write That Play* (1939), states that Expressionism on stage should be understood as a process of removing the skullcap and peeping inside the brain to have a look at its inner workings (qtd in Gottfried 122). Miller attempted exactly this in *Salesman* as he opened up Willy Loman's head on the theatrical stage; the playwright's intentions are validated by the fact that *The Inside of His Head* was the play's original title (122).

It is both rare and remarkable for a writer to offer his readers a full length essay narrating the literary influences on his works; Miller does exactly this in "The Shadows of the Gods", written in 1958, and in several other of his essays as well. Talking about Eugene O' Neill's plays, Miller says that he found it "reactionary" when O'Neill stated that his plays were not about man's relation to man but about man's relation to God. He critically analysed O'Neill's works even as a college student and discussed them in Prof. Rowe's classes. It must not miss consideration that by the time Miller entered the American theatre scene, O'Neill had begun to appear both "escapist and erudite" (Abbotson, *Critical* 444). Miller states that even though he and O'Neill were ideologically different as they saw power originating from different sources, there was an uncanny likeness in their objectives related to theatre:

> I meant, not ideologically but dramatically speaking. I too had a religion, however unwilling I was to be so backward. A religion with no gods but with godlike powers. The powers of economic crisis and political imperatives which had twisted, torn, eroded, and marked everything and everyone I laid eyes on. (*CE* 148)

To Miller, a young playwright more inclined towards solving immediate social problems, O'Neill's plays were bound to appear too "cosmic"; especially so in a universe crying for "practical solutions" to various problems (Gottfried 35).

Among playwrights who inspired Miller's approach to drama, Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) stands tall. The Norwegian playwright, celebrated as the father of Realism in theatre, inspired Arthur Miller when the latter was still a budding university playwright. Prof. Rowe ingrained in his students a deep love for the Norwegian playwright. Rowe's *Write That Play* offers a prolonged discussion and analysis of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Miller watched as many of Ibsen's plays as he could, which included a production of *A Doll's House* in 1937, and later a production of *Ghosts* that he chanced to watch in Brooklyn (35).

Prof. Rowe's classes at Michigan taught Miller two significant Ibsen concepts of playwriting: beginning the play with a "scenario" and usage of the "problem complication-crisis formula" for dramatic construction (34). Like Ibsen, Miller also brought to light in his plays the events of the past and then connected them to the present circumstances of his characters (38). Miller's plays, again much like Ibsen's, usually begin with a seemingly normal domestic scene, gradually exposing all past remorse, impediments, and complications of the characters' lives.

Brenda Murphy in her essay, "The Tradition of Social Drama: Miller and His Forebears", asserts that Miller's inclination lay most definitely in Ibsen's social plays as they "articulated the conflict between individual desire and social responsibility" (18). It is apparent that Miller's like-mindedness with Ibsen goes much "deeper than technique" (15). His first Broadway hit, *All My Sons*, is probably "his most consciously Ibsenesque play" (15); and it is the play's theme of individual responsibility towards society that emerges to be its most Ibsenesque feature (19). Susan Abbotson also believes that the 1947 play bears a very strong influence of Ibsen's plays such as *The Wild Duck* and *The Pillars of Society* (*Student* 21). According to Murphy, *The Man Who Had All the Luck* (1944), Miller's first play to get a Broadway opening, bears a "close affinity" to Ibsen's famous play, *The Master Builder* ("Tradition" 16). If not for "the fundamental thematic divergence" in Miller's debut play, it would have been seen as a reworked facsimile of Ibsen's. Miller believed Ibsen's plays to be strongly reinforcing "the right of the individual to tell the truth", even when opposed by the majority (19). But despite all these thematic similarities, Miller evidently replaces the "tragic universe" of Ibsen with his own "existential alternative" (17). Also, Ibsen's strong beliefs in "supernatural forms" are replaced by Miller's faith in the "efficacy of the praxis—willed action" (18).

In his essay, "The Family in Modern Drama", Arthur Miller refers to Henrik Ibsen as the "master of Realism" and asserts that one "ought to" naturally think of Ibsen when thinking of Realism; because according to him, Ibsen not only "used the form but pressed it very close to its ultimate limits" (*CE* 93). He feels that the Norwegian playwright deserves more applause and respect for being able to strike in his plays a fine balance between Realism and figurative, symbolic, and representative finesse— for crafting a counterpoint amid the personal and public aspects of human existence. He gives credit to Ibsen for not writing merely "to photograph scenes from life" but for interpreting everyday ordinary happenings and bringing out "their concealed significance for society" (94). Ibsen's plays succeeded in creating "a symbol on the stage" (94); in order to substantiate

this opinion, Miller illustrates that when Nora famously slammed the door in *A Doll's House*, not many European or Norwegian women were slamming doors to move out of their "hypocritical" marital relationships; therefore, Ibsen's play must be viewed as an interpretation of reality and not reality itself (94).

In his 1994 essay, "Ibsen and the Drama of Today", Miller discourses about the pertinence of Ibsen and his plays in the contemporary scenario. Appreciating his vision, Miller laments that unfortunately, the playwright has only been seen as a preacher, lacking lyrical, poetic, and symbolic skills; Miller views it as a lack of understanding of his works. At the same time, he highlights that it can be attributed to the fact that Ibsen's plays are usually read in translation, and thus lost (529).

Miller praises Ibsen's dramatic genius for making "*everything* fit together like a natural organism" and for his ability to walk in the footsteps of the great Greek dramatists by making "past transgressions a seed for the present catastrophe" (530). He critiques the absurdist school for its tendency to sack the past, for tagging it as extraneous, and for only being concerned with the current situation, placing it superior to the character (530-1).

Arthur Miller acknowledged Ibsen as an influence on his early works, but, at the same time, he stated that he was certainly not "recreating" Ibsen in all of his plays of the later decades (Hayman 6). Miller's adaptation of *An Enemy of the People* was not very well received; in fact, Miller is often criticised for meddling with Ibsen's plot and characters (Bronsen 243). Nevertheless, today, Miller's adaptation is seen as an important part his dramatic canon.

His appreciation of the Greek classics also began when he was pursuing his bachelor's degree at the University of Michigan, and again, it was Prof. Rowe who stimulated in him a love for the Greeks. Miller strongly drew his impetus from the Greek playwrights; in fact, his respect for Ibsen was also mostly based on his achievement of "carrying the Greeks into nineteenth century Europe"; he believed that both the Greeks and Ibsen were "obsessed with the birds coming home to roost . . .", and it was something he naturally related to (qtd in Bigsby, *Arthur Miller* 49). In his memoir, *Timebends*, he writes:

> My mind was taken over by the basic Greek structural concept of a past stretching so far back that its origins were lost in myth, surfacing in the present and donating a dilemma to the persons on the stage, who were astounded and awestruck by the wonderful train of seeming accidents that unveiled their connections to that past.
> (232-33)

Like the Greek dramatists, Miller saw man in connection with his society, and also believed in man's allegiance with a moral law, more than with any other law of the land. He felt disappointed in American drama for creating a sort of clear separation between the individual and society, and for focusing more on "separation" and less on "connection" (Abbotson, *Student* 19). He found this approach to be "dehumanising" (19).

The playwright singled "vendetta", emphasising family ties and vengeance, to be the secret of Greek drama, a concept which he deemed unfamiliar to the Englishmen and the Americans (Bigsby, *Modern* 94). In his 1955 essay, "On Social Plays", Miller appreciates the substance of Greek plays for their ability to serve a social function, for portraying "man as a social animal" and not as an entity moving in isolation, for exhibiting a universal concern (*CE* 68), which holds relevance in the modern world despite various changes and developments. The Greek dramatists, according to Miller, knew how to integrate the "social" with the "psychological"; this being their chief contribution to drama. He believed that drama's value could tremendously increase by dealing with the "whole man", instead of portraying the "subjective" or "social life" in isolation (69).

Miller's drama has consistently been social drama; according to Bigsby, it is not just his appreciation for the Greeks and Ibsen that inclines him to social drama but his Jewish background also. His works keep reinstating his belief in the "polis"— man as part of the society and society for man (Bigsby, *Modern* 115). In fact, Bigsby believes that *All My Sons* is both Miller's Greek play and his Ibsen play (80). After some critics attacked *Death of a Salesman,* calling Miller's conception of tragedy faulty, he wrote an essay, which was originally published in 1949, in the *New York Times*, just two weeks after the opening of his play. Titled as "Tragedy and the Common Man", the essay is a defence of Miller's claims that his play is a tragedy in a full dramatic sense for "the common man is as apt a subject for tragedy in its highest sense as kings were to the Greeks" (*CE* 8). Though the essay is highly anthologised, Miller's concept of a common man tragedy is still much debated.

His plays, *All My Sons* and *A View from the Bridge* are both tragedies of the "common man", displaying the classical Greek structure. *A View from the Bridge,* was his clear attempt at writing a modern Greek tragedy. It grew out of a story he had heard in Red Hook, about a man who turned in two unlawful immigrants, disrespecting the tribal code of the Italian community in Brooklyn. Eddie Carbone, the central male character of the play, "shares with Oedipus an obsession that leads him towards self-destruction" (Bigsby,

Modern 95). Likewise, Alfieri, the lawyer Eddie consults in the play, supplants the Greek chorus.

Susan Abbotson believes that Miller's "indebtedness" to the Greeks did not fade in his later plays also; the issues of "identities" is a central theme of his later play, *Broken Glass*, which is an integral part of most Greek plays also (*Student* 20). However, it is not just theme, but structure also that *Broken Glass* borrows from the classic Greeks: its "short length" and a "sense of predictability" in its plot encourage one to perceive it as a Greek play (20).

Arthur Miller also found great stimulus in the works of Russian literary giants, Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoyevsky. In his youth, Arthur Miller was moved by Dostoyevsky's works, along with those of Leo Tolstoy's. In an interview given to Balakian, Miller spoke of his fascination for the Russian writers: "Tolstoy and Dostoevsky occupy different sides of the brain. I wouldn't put one above the other. I've got to simply worship both of them" (*CE* 478). About Dostoevsky's *Karmazov*, Miller said that reading it is just like "eating bread" (478).

He read *Crime and Punishment* when he was working at the auto parts warehouse, and was deeply enthralled by the power of Dostoyevsky's writing; but he initially thought it was a detective story (Abbotson, *Critical* 385). Miller could identify with Dostoyevsky's "experience as a writer frequently unheeded in his native country and often suppressed" (385). Abbotson believes that from Tolstoy's works, Miller learnt the courage to "bare his soul" in his writing, which perhaps explains why most of the central male characters of his plays such as Biff Loman and John Proctor have a lot of Miller in themselves (Abbotson, *Student* 21).

Arthur Miller was also inspired by existential writers, Albert Camus and Jean Paul Sartre, and in 1959, wrote a screenplay for Camus' novel, *The Fall*. Christopher Bigsby believes Miller's 1964 play, *Incident at Vichy*, to be deeply influenced by Camus' work (*Critical* 233). Several of his other plays such as *All My Sons, The Crucible, After the Fall, The Archbishop's Ceiling*, and *Broken Glass* bear strong existential touches.

Among American playwrights who left a deep imprint on Arthur Miller's thought process and plays, were Tennessee Williams and Clifford Odets. In *Timebends*, Miller shows great respect and admiration for Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) and Odets' *Waiting for Lefty* (1935). He admired the lyrical quality of Williams' language, and responded to Odets' socialist commitments (308).

Concluding the discussion, it can be stated that despite all these literary and dramatic influences on his writing, the chief foundation of Arthur Miller's drama was always his own life and experiences, and also what he heard and read from multiple sources in his daily life. He interpreted his everyday stories to create life on stage.

Review of Literature

From his first Michigan University play, *No Villain* (1935) to his last stage play, *Finishing the Picture* (2004), Arthur Miller's writing career spanned over seven decades. Celebrated as one of the most authoritative playwrights of the twentieth century, Miller is much researched upon. There is a staggering number of books and articles on him; his plays, his writing style, the themes he chose, almost everything about Miller has been closely analysed and explored by scholars, critics, students, readers, and most importantly by his audiences.

As primary sources, the three volumes used for the dissertation are play collections, published in hardcover, by the Library of America. Divided as *Arthur Miller: Collected Plays 1944-1961, Arthur Miller: Collected Plays 1964-1982, and Arthur Miller: Collected Plays 1987-2004*, these collections edited by Tony Kushner, also contain some of Miller's prose reflections, his radio pieces, and his early plays such as *The Golden Years*.

Arthur Miller's collections of essays, *Echoes Down the Corridor* and *The Collected Essays of Arthur Miller (Theatre Makers),* edited by Steven R. Centola and Matthew Roudane, respectively, provide the researcher with a thorough insight into Miller's mind and thought process. In these essays, the playwright talks extensively about social, personal, and professional issues; they give one the feeling of listening to Miller thinking out aloud. Though the selected later plays barely find any coverage in Miller's essay collections, but, to analyse these plays, the essays serve as a trustworthy base.

There is only one essay that bears a direct link to one of the selected later plays, *The Last Yankee*; this essay titled "About Theatre Language", was originally a foreword to the 1994 edition of the play. It discourses generally on realism in theatre and on the plays of American playwrights, O'Neill, Williams, and Odets. Miller discusses about his play's main theme, that is, the social problem of clinical depression, highlighting "the moral and social myths feeding the disease" (*CE* 526). Much of Miller's explanation in the essay helps in completely understanding the individual and social trauma as embodied in the characters of *The Last Yankee.*

Miller's other essays may not address the later plays directly but they still help in understanding his writing; for instance, his essays expressing his views on Nazism and Holocaust naturally help one grasp the message given through another of his later plays, *Broken Glass*.

Along with these essay collections, two books of Arthur Miller's conversations with Matthew C. Roudane and Mel Gussow, titled, *Conversations with Arthur Miller* (literary conversations series) and *Conversations with Miller* (centenary edition), respectively, have also been helpful in understanding Miller's own views on his plays and playwriting in general. Some of these conversations do touch upon the selected later plays, but, only in passing; they cannot classify as detailed discussions. For instance, while discussing about the productions of his recent plays in America and London with Mel Gussow, Miller also talks about the stage settings and architecture being employed for the productions of *The Last Yankee* and *Broken Glass*.

Timebends: A Life, published in 1987, is a detailed discussion of all aspects of his life as a writer and person. In a very honest and witty manner, Miller succeeds in narrating a number of intriguing stories about his life as a literary artist. Even though an autobiography is often categorized as a purely personal account, yet, Miller's life history is an academic resource, nonetheless. *Timebends*, symbolising the non-chronological narration of his life's events, effectively illustrates the collective and universal nature of Arthur Miller's plays.

Since all the selected plays, excepting *Danger: Memory*, are productions of the 1990s and early 2000s, Miller's memoir does not offer any discussion on them. Miller informs us that he based the central characters of his one-act, *I Can't Remember Anything*, on his close friends and neighbours, the Calders. The other one-act of the double bill, *Clara* also gets a short description in the book.

There is a huge pool of academicians and literary critics who contribute to the scholarship on American drama and Arthur Miller, but, since this dissertation focuses specifically on Miller's selected later plays produced between 1987-2004, its secondary resources are mostly the books and research papers contributed by preeminent Arthur Miller scholars such as Christopher Bigsby, Susan Abbotson, Brenda Murphy, to name a few. Miller's later plays, even though unique masterpieces in their own right, have not yet attained a complete public acknowledgement and appreciation, highlighting the need to give them their due space, to contribute to the little scholarship available on them. Books

and research articles by the following authors and scholars have served as secondary resources [v]:

Susan C.W Abbotson is a leading scholar of American drama and a very helpful critical authority on Arthur Miller, his life, and works. Originally from the UK, Abbotson ventured into America in 1990 and is currently a professor at Rhode Island College, United States. Prof. Abbotson has written three books on Miller, covering various aspects of his personal and professional life, namely, *Student Companion to Arthur Miller* (2000), *Critical Companion to Arthur Miller: A Literary Reference to His Life And Work,* and *A Student Handbook to the Plays of Arthur Miller: All My Sons, Death of a Salesman, The Crucible, A View from the Bridge, Broken Glass* (2013).

Critical Companion to Arthur Miller is probably the most complete encyclopaedic book on the playwright, alphabetically covering all aspects of his plays, short-stories, theatre essays, screenplays, and poetry. The volume talks in detail about the selected later plays also. Each of the selected plays has been explained by Abbotson through an individual synopsis, character description, critical commentary, initial reviews, and scholarship available on it.

Abbotson's *Student Companion to Arthur Miller* also provides a wide-ranging discussion on Miller's literary heritage, life, and some of his plays. It has a special chapter dedicated to one of the selected plays, *The Ride down Mt. Morgan,* in which she compares the play's central character, Lyman Felt, to Willy Loman, the salesman from Miller's 1947 play.

Her book on the prevalent themes in American drama, *Thematic Guide to American Drama* (2003), contains a chapter titled, "Jewish-American Experience", which offers a short yet important discussion on Miller's *Broken Glass.* This chapter has helped in writing about the themes of ethnicity and identity, particularly covered in Chapter 3.

Susan Abbotson is also one of the few scholars to have written many important essays on Miller's later works, published as book chapters and journal articles. Her article, "Reconnecting and Reasserting the Self: The Art of Compromise in Arthur Miller's *The Last Yankee*", published in *South Atlantic Review,* in 1998, offers a detailed discussion on the play. It highlights the need for compromise in the modern world, especially so in a country such as America, where the pressures to succeed and attain "more" lie too heavy on human lives. The article focuses on how the "false myths" associated with American culture that promotes unchecked greed and acquisition, disorient human lives. Abbotson analyses all characters of *The Last Yankee* individually and also in relation with each other,

focusing on Miller's message of "creating balance" to live a more peaceful life. She points out how the final compromise between Patricia Hamilton and Leroy Hamilton helps them leave together for home while Fricks, the other couple in the play, are left behind in the mental institution.

Another journal article by Abbotson, "Issues of Identity in *Broken Glass:* A Humanist Response to a Postmodern World", published in 1999, in the *Journal of American Drama and Theatre*, offers a detailed discussion on the play, highlighting Miller's message: the need to retain "meaning" in the middle of apparent "meaninglessness".

Another of Abbotson's journal articles, "The Dangers of Memory in Arthur Miller's *I Can't Remember Anything*", published in 2006, in *Journal of American Drama and Theatre*, offers a brief summary of the play along with some very helpful critical comments on Miller's theme of "memory" and its "dangers" as employed in the one-act.

Christopher Bigsby, a British analyst and novelist, who is also a professor of American Studies at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, United Kingdom, is an Arthur Miller critic and commentator of great repute. Bigsby heads the *Arthur Miller Centre* at the university, and his abundant expertise in American drama, particularly in Arthur Miller's plays, is available in the form of his academic books, articles, and essays. According to Bigsby, it is Miller's "concern with the past and its connection with the present" (*Critical* 1) that runs opposite to basic American values, making him relatively unpopular in America. Bigsby regards the nineties as Miller's "most prolific" decade since the 1960s (*Cambridge* 168).

His volumes on the playwright, titled, *File on Miller* (1988), a collection of his interviews with the playwright, *Arthur Miller & Company* (1990), critical commentaries on Miller's works, *Arthur Miller: A Critical Study* (2005), a collection of reflections on Arthur Miller contributed by writers, actors, directors, and friends, *Remembering Arthur Miller* (2005), and *Arthur Miller* (2010), have been of enormous help in building a critical insight into all of Miller's plays.

Bigsby has edited *The Cambridge Companion to Arthur Miller* (1997), and has also updated Harold Clurman's *The Portable Arthur Miller* (1993). The *Cambridge Companion* is a collection of essays by various renowned Miller scholars including Brenda Murphy and Janet N. Balakian. From the point of view of the dissertation, this book is important as it includes two chapters which discuss Miller's selected later plays. These chapters, named very simply as "Miller in the eighties" and "Miller in the nineties", written by June Schlueter and Christopher Bigsby, respectively, cover all the selected plays, offering

helpful critical insights. With his authoritative written output, Bigsby has been able to touch upon all strands of Arthur Miller's life and works. Even Harold Clurman's *The Portable Arthur Miller* offers chapters on two of the selected plays, *The Last Yankee* and *Broken Glass*.

Bigsby's most comprehensive book on the playwright, *Arthur Miller: A Critical Study* (2005), published shortly before Miller's death, facilitates a complete exploration of Miller as a playwright and person. The fact that both Miller and Bigsby shared a great friendship definitely adds to the beauty of this volume; Bigsby has been privileged to have access to a lot of the playwright's unpublished essays and plays as well. The author also frequently interviewed Miller, which is how his volumes are able to provide enough background information on all of Miller's plays, including the plays selected for the thesis.

Critical Study talks comprehensively about Miller's selected later plays written in late 1980s, '90s, and early 2000s. Arthur Miller is usually seen as a playwright of the mid-century, and the selected plays are his uncelebrated stroke of genius, which are given space in this book. Bigsby quite openly talks about Miller's loss of favour in America, because of his countrymen's inability to probe pivotal questions and preserve the past, as they move swiftly into a future. He very critically analyses all of Miller's works, chronologically, and shows Miller's canon as a progressing whole. This sequential presentation of Miller's life and works evidences Bigsby's very keen and close readings of all of Miller's plays.

Harold Bloom, a very reputed literary critic and scholar, contributes to the scholarship on Miller's later plays through a volume edited by him, *Arthur Miller (Bloom's Modern Critical Views)*, published in 2007. The book contains some very important essays on the selected later plays: "Arthur Miller's Ironic Resurrection" by Jeffrey D. Mason facilitates a better understanding of *Resurrection Blues* as a political satire. The discussion offered by Mason is detailed enough to analyse Miller's play from all angles. Another essay in this volume, "Finishing the Picture: Arthur Miller, 1915–2005" by Laurence Goldstein, gives a detailed account of Miller's last stage play, offering some interesting information on its autobiographical strains. Yet another article in the same volume, "Arthur Miller and the Art of the Possible" by Steven R. Centola, explains the puzzles of the human mind as portrayed in Miller's *Mr. Peters' Connections*.

Enoch Brater is another Arthur Miller scholar who has written important books on his plays; he has also edited works written by other scholars. Brater is a *Kenneth T. Rowe Collegiate Professor* at the University of Michigan (Miller's own alma mater), and has made great contributions in the field of theatre studies. *Arthur Miller's America: Theatre*

and Culture in a Time of Change (2003), edited by Brater, is a collection of insightful articles on Miller and his works contributed by scholars, theatre practitioners, and critics of great repute.

From the point view of this research document, Brater's book is a great resource as it houses a special chapter titled, "The Late Plays of Arthur Miller" by Robert Scanlan, in which he offers critical commentaries on all of the selected works, from *Danger: Memory* (1987) to *Finishing the Picture* (2004). Scanlan calls Miller's one-acts "five finger exercises" and "day dreams"; he believes that the playwright's grand success with the "Big Four", that is, his stage plays written between 1947 and 56, has always been "held against him"—his later plays are usually, quite unfairly, compared to his earlier works (181). The author also feels that *The Last Yankee* is better crafted than Miller's much celebrated *All My Sons* and *Broken* Glass more "emotionally complex" (181) and agonizing than *Death of a Salesman*. Scanlan points towards the lack of scholarship on Miller's later works, highlighting the great deal of teachings these plays are capable of imparting.

Brater has also written an illustrated biography of Arthur Miller, titled, *Arthur Miller: A Playwright's Life and Works* (2005), which covers all aspects of Miller's personal and professional life. Another important volume on Miller's plays, edited by Brater, is *Arthur Miller's Global Theatre* (2007), which is a collection of essays on Miller's plays, in which Brater and many other scholars and critics explore the themes, ideologies, and characterization of his plays, with a special focus on how the playwright's works are understood beyond America, crossing various cultural and linguistic boundaries. The volume helps understand the international significance of Arthur Miller as a playwright.

Katherine E. Egerton, another leading scholar, is an Associate Professor and Program Chair of English at Berea College, United States. Egerton's doctoral dissertation, "Sick in Twos and Threes and Fours: Representation, Redemption and Mental Illness in Arthur Miller's Later Plays" (2003), has been of immense help in understanding three of the selected plays, *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*, *The Last Yankee,* and *Broken Glass*. Her doctoral work offers a detailed analysis of the portrayal of illness, patients, health care systems, and practitioners in the given plays.

Egerton's notes and commentaries on *The Last Yankee*, published in 2011 as Metheun drama student edition, delivers interesting insights into the play. Her article, "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Cross: Arthur Miller's *Resurrection Blues*", published in 2006, in *Journal of American Drama and Theatre*, discusses Miller's

"penultimate play" as a satire (9). Egerton believes that irrespective of how Miller's plays are received when produced, they have the ability to stand the test of time
(26). Another of her articles, "The Road to Reno: Inge Morath, Marilyn Monroe, and The Embodiment Of the American West", published in 2007, in the prestigious *Arthur Miller Journal*, though not a direct commentary on Miller's *Finishing the Picture*, helps in understanding the play, nevertheless. The article provides some very important details about the film shoot of *The Misfits*—experiences on which Miller had based his last stage play.

Martin Gottfried is another drama critic and scholar whose book on Miller, titled, *Arthur Miller: His Life and Works* (2003), gives us important biographical details of the playwright, along with a thorough examination of his plays and other works. Gottfried's book also offers a brief discussion on the selected plays, *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* and *Broken Glass*, in the last section of this book, titled, "Survivor".

Paula Langteau, a leading academic researcher, has written many substantial articles on Arthur Miller and his works; *Miller and Middle America*, a collection of essays edited by her, contains some of the most helpful and knowledgeable articles on Miller's selected later plays. Her own article in this volume, "Arthur Miller's *Clara*: An Interrogation of Middle American Political Correctness", helps a better understanding of Albert Kroll's character in the play, whose dilemma lies in his reluctance to accept his ingrained bigotry. Other articles in the volume, contributed by Stephen A. Marino, Carlos Campo, William Smith, and Ashis Sengupta are commentaries on the other later plays, *The Last Yankee*, *Broken Glass*, and *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*.

Another very important scholar of American drama is Terry Otten, whose book *Temptation in the Dramas of Arthur Miller* (2002), has immensely helped in understanding the characters in the selected plays. The book offers an insightful analysis on Miller's later works; in its last chapter, titled, "Last Plays of the Century", Otten focuses on the themes of "innocence" and "moral agency". Otten merges a broad overview of Miller's canon with his particular opinions about innocence and the motif of the Fall of Man through his works; he declares all of Miller's characters culpable.

Stephen A. Marino, a professor at St. Francis College, United States, has contributed very significantly to Arthur Miller research. His doctoral dissertation on Arthur Miller's plays, titled, *Arthur Miller's Language: The Poetic in the Colloquial*, has been very helpful in understanding the "imagery" and other poetic elements subtly incorporated in

Miller's selected plays. Along with this, Marino offers a score of other essays that facilitate understanding Arthur Miller as a playwright.

Sangeeta Sharma, a professor at the University of Mumbai, India, has made her contribution to the scholarship on Arthur Miller's later plays through her book, *In The Shadows: Women In Arthur Miller's Plays* (2012). Her book scrutinizes *The Last Yankee*, *Broken Glass,* and *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* through the feminist lens: Sharma highlights how women in Miller's plays continue as subservient creatures. Her feminist commentaries on these plays have helped Chapter 3, in which the theme of the "pigeonhole of gender" is discoursed upon.

Notes and articles published by many other drama scholars have helped in grasping Miller's vision in the selected plays. Tanya Tomasch's notes, "Evil as a Manmade Phenomenon: Denial, Humour and Sex In Arthur Miller's *Broken Glass*", published in *Arthur Miller Journal,* in 2013, have been helpful to the work. In Tomasch's words, "*Broken Glass* is funny, sexy and deadly serious. It deals the best and the worst that human beings are capable of in a world where the personal and the political spheres do not meet enough" (85).

Gene A. Plunka's article on the same play, "Jewish Responsibility During the Holocaust: Miller's *Broken Glass* and Megged's *Hanna Senesh*", published in *Arthur Miller Journal*, in 2009, also helps in understanding the various nuances of Miller's play. Plunka discourses on the subject of "Jewish moral commitment during the Holocaust" (13). Much like Otten's claim of culpability of all characters in Miller's plays, Plunka also highlights how all characters of *Broken Glass* are given to the disease of passivity and Nazism, causing larger emotional and psychological miseries.

Bas Baanders' article, "The Writer Who Wrote More than He Meant to Write: on Arthur Miller's *Broken Glass*", published in *Zutot*, in 2002, highlights how through this play, Miller warns people against the death-traps of anti-Semitism, racial bigotry, and repression. Baanders' entire discussion on the play is chiefly based on how Miller treats the play's theme of Jewishness through his narration and technique. A subsection of this article, "Beyond Hysteria", takes the discussion further to a complete analysis of American anti-Semitism and its impact on the various characters of the play.

Alison Forsyth's article' "The Trauma of Articulation: Holocaust Representation in *After the Fall* and *Broken Glass*", published in *Arthur Miller Journal*, in 2008, discusses how Miller chooses to portray the Holocaust and its aftermath in this play. Forsyth's article also touches upon all other plays of Miller's, which exhibit similar themes.

Jon Tuttle's article, "Strange Face, Other Minds: Sartre, Miller, and *Clara*", published in the *Journal of American Drama and Theatre* in 2003, has facilitated an existential understanding of the one-act.

Maria Kurdi's article on *The Last Yankee*, "You Just Have to Love this World: Arthur Miller's *The Last Yankee*", published in *Eger Journal of American Studies* throws light on Miller's message ingrained in the play.

The critical opinions and commentaries contained in the dissertation highlight the individual and social paralysis as visible in the selected later plays, and all the academic works mentioned above have helped the development of this thought. These academic works, along with various other performance reviews and newspaper articles related to the selected plays, arrange for a good base to develop critical insights into Miller's canon. And then, there are many other scholars associated with Arthur Miller scholarship whose works may not directly be about the selected later plays, but their articles and books have helped in understanding Arthur Miller as a playwright and literary artist.

Methodology

According to Cambridge online dictionary, the term "paralysis" denotes a condition in which one is "unable to move all or part" of one's body because of "illness or everyday injury" (*Cambridge*). Miller's selected later plays demonstrate the emotional and psychological paralysis of people's lives in America. While some central characters of these plays display actual physical numbness, almost all of them are emotionally anesthetized—continuing in a state of complete stasis, vulnerability, and feebleness. However, Miller strongly illustrates how the sickness of the individual is not his own—it is his society that's equally sick and numbed.

This research work is principally directed at underlining the individual and social paralysis that has become an integral aspect of human existence in America. It aims at finding out and analysing the actual reasons responsible for this numbed human state. And in order to validate the argument and take the discussion further, the dissertation makes use of some key literary theories and historical researches that depict the "otherness", alienation, and brokenness experienced by the citizens of America, among which the trauma related to race, gender, and class are three prominent categories.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) provides a strong foundation to the argument related to human trauma as a result of "hyphens", that are an important identity marker in the

American milieu. According to Sanders Gilman, race can be defined as “a constructed category of social organization as much as it is a reflection of some aspects of biological reality”; in practical terms, one’s “racial identity” is a “powerful force” shaping his understanding of “self” (*The Jew’s Body* 170). Critical Race Theory found its footing in the decade of 1970s with the primary work of "Derrick Bell (an African-American) and Alan Freeman (a white), both of whom were deeply distressed over the slow pace of racial reform in the United States" (Delgado & Stefancic xvi). CRT begins with a number of simple insights; one of which is that racism is “normal” and “not aberrant” in American culture (xvi). And because “racism” is an "ingrained feature" of the American landscape, it looks ordinary and regular to American citizens (xvi), which can be immensely detrimental to human health and well-being.

Miller’s concern for the culture of “hyphens” has been highlighted by taking into consideration all racial segments of the American populace as portrayed in his selected plays. This research addresses all myths that have led to the trauma of the Jews across the globe (with special focus on the ones who are immigrants / immigrants’ children in America) through the works of Sanders L. Gilman and Leonard Dinnerstein. To throw light on the sufferings of the Black populace of America, some key race theories by Frantz Fanon and Du Bois have been applied to understand the impact of America’s negative racial dynamics on the blacks.

The dissertation also makes use of some important feminist theories to highpoint the alienating distresses endured by the American women as portrayed by Miller in the selected plays. Most feminist writers such as Shulamith Firestone, believe that women’s oppression primarily originates from their “childbearing and childrearing” duties and choices (72)—their reproductive biology being chiefly responsible for their state of “continued oppression” (73). According to Simone de Beauvoir, for centuries, men have successfully utilized this biological advantage (difference) to assume the status of superior subjects, relegating women to the status of the “other”. Since a routine sexual act between man and woman may result in childbearing burdens for the latter, the very act forces her “into a state of dependency upon the male and the species” (*Second Sex* 368). Even in the sexual act, “it is the male—as in most animals—who has the aggressive role, the female submitting to his embrace.” (368). To locate the “otherness” experienced by women in America, this dissertation bases its discussion on the arguments offered by key feminist writers such as Betty Friedan, Elaine Showalter, Simone de Beauvoir, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Shulamith Firestone, and Jessie Bernard.

Karl Marx understood the history of any society as the history of "class struggle". Marxist Literary Criticism examines literature as the creation of the prevalent economic condition of the society and as a product of the apparent class struggles. It also conceives literature as a consequence of the socio-cultural environment in which it is conceptualised and created. Viewing Arthur Miller's selected plays through the Marxist lens facilitates the reader/researcher to see them as products of America's history, as important sources of information about the social, political, and economic conditions of the age. The application of Marxist literary criticism to the selected plays has assisted in understanding how the hierarchical and ranked systems and attitudes in any given society can prove detrimental to human welfare as such structures naturally lead the society's members to view each other as mere "categories".

Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism is the informative perspective of literature that makes use of the techniques and procedures of psychoanalysis. As defined in Peter Barry's much referenced book, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literal and Cultural Theory*, "psychoanalysis itself is a form of therapy which aims to cure mental disorder by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind" (96). Freud's notion of the "unconscious", which serves as a foundation for all his other theories, facilitates the understanding of the complex human psyche. Stressing on the part played by one's "unconscious", psychoanalysis helps in effectively determining human behaviour, as its methods examine the comatose mental activities. Literature and psychology manifestly go hand in hand, substantially assisting each other.

Literature produces "valuable information" that helps us better comprehend "personality dynamics and mental disorders prevalent during a particular historical period"; it successfully brings to surface the "inner experiences" of those with troubled psyches. (Coleman 8). Arthur Miller evidently wishes to explore the complexities of the human psyche through his characterization and overall playwriting. As can be seen, the characters in the selected plays display emotional, psychological, and sexual paralysis and numbness, which can be better highlighted and understood with the help of various theories of psychoanalysis. Freudian theories related to "hysteria", "dreamworks", etc., have been used to analyse the selected texts.

de Beauvoir's texts on "ageing" and "ageism" have been used to study the distresses of America's ageing populace. The theories of "alienation" are the main base on which all other critical theories would be applied to analyse the selected plays.

What is the “individual and social paralysis” that Miller consciously depicts in the selected later plays and how is the trauma of the individual connected integrally with the trauma of the society at large and vice-versa, are the key research questions answered in the chapters outlined. In highlighting the individual and social predicament of the American nation, this research celebrates the achievement of Arthur Miller as a truthful chronicler of his times.

Chapter 2

"The Water is in the Fish": The Numbed Numbs

> GELLBURG: Be straight with me—is she going to come out of this?
> HYMAN: . . . I have this unconventional approach to illness, Phillip. Especially where the mental element is involved. I believe we get sick in twos and threes and fours, not alone as individuals. You follow me? . . . (*Collected Plays*[vi] 332)

Sylvia cannot move her legs, Karen speaks in non-sequiturs, Patricia cannot decide if she is fit to leave the mental institution, Jeanine sees no reason to live, Kitty cannot finish the picture, Leonora cannot remember anything, and Mr. Peters cannot find the "subject". Paralysis is at the heart of Arthur Miller's later plays, manifested more concretely in his female characters, but his male characters suffer and struggle no less. At times, the numbness expresses itself through inexplicable yet overt signs such as the paralysed legs of Sylvia Gellburg in *Broken Glass* or the clinical depression of Patricia and Karen in *The Last Yankee* and Kitty in *Finishing the Picture*, respectively. At other times, the numbness is more covert, as in the case of Sylvia's husband, Phillip Gellburg, who having been suppressed for so many years, is left with only one option—to explode with a shock.

From the very start of his writing career, Arthur Miller attempted to depict the interdependence between individuals and their society. The central premise of all his works, his main precept, "the fish is in the water and the water is in the fish" (Miller, *CE* 151), is an analogy that justifies the fact that America's social infirmity contributes quite prominently to the infirmity of her people and vice-versa. Paralysis is both an individual and social condition—the inevitable intermingling of the personal and social spheres of human existence ensures that this illness of isolation, helplessness, and numbness is perennially transferred from one individual to the other.

The lack of conscience of his country pervades the atmosphere of Arthur Miller's drama; like his earlier plays, the selected later plays also wrestle with the mounting "cynicism" and "ambiguities" of the contemporary age (Otten 247), demonstrating individual and social vulnerability and malfunction. The characters in these plays are an embodiment of the decaying morals, consumerism, and corruption of a culture in decline. Discord (marital, familial, and social), low self-esteem, material narcissism, denial of responsibility, and various other seemingly "individual" predicaments, largely contribute to social and national vacuum. Therefore, the cryptic immobility of Sylvia Gellburg's legs

is not only her personal inadequacy but should instead be viewed as a classic example of her country's and her own inaction in the face of injustice and torture.

Almost fifty years before Miller penned *Broken Glass*, he had heard of the mysterious paralysis of a neighbourhood woman's legs, a woman whose husband always dressed in black, exactly like Phillip Gellburg does in the play (Abbotson, *Critical* 82). Miller could relate that woman's cryptic stasis to the numbness everyone showed then "in the face of Hitler" (Lewis, "Headlines" 6). Taking the cue from there, Miller narrates the story of the Gellburgs, a Jewish-American couple, in whose lives the audience can see a microcosm of the paralysis that gripped America in November 1938, when news of the Nazi persecutions of the Jews, just after *Kristallnacht*, reached the country.

Sylvia Gellburg, the central female character of *Broken Glass*, is a 1930s' American woman confined to the wheelchair — part of a country inactive in the face of apparent evil. By placing at the play's centre an immobile and diseased female, the playwright successfully conveys how the malaise of the society is embodied in the individual and vice-versa. Like most other characters of the selected plays, Sylvia roams about in numbed spaces, symbolising the moral and emotional handicap of the society at large. Her legs turn to "butter" (*CP* 329) exactly when the Germans are publicly torturing the Jews, rendering them homeless, injured, and dead, and ransacking their personal and public property with an inhumanity which shook the whole of the twentieth century.

An immensely well-read and sharp woman, Sylvia panics over the Jewish situation in Germany because unlike others who surround her, her "historical sense is not paralysed" (Meyer 255); but the play unfolds to show how it is her personal sense that has remained inert for all these years. The picture of an old Jewish man she sees in the newspapers appears to her a splitting image of her own grandfather; she feels suffocated thinking about this brutal torture of men and women for no apparent fault of theirs. "He had the same exact glasses with the wire frames. I can't get it out of my mind" (*CP* 335), she says to Harriet, her sister, unable to arouse the latter's interest.

> SYLVIA: But why don't they run out of the country! What is the matter with those people! Don't you understand . . .? (*Screaming.*): . . . This is an *emergency!* What if they kill those children! Where is Roosevelt! Where is England! Somebody should do something before they murder us all! (371)

Sylvia's physician in the play, Dr. Harry Hyman, even though not a trained psychiatrist but passionately interested in her case, concludes that Sylvia's paralysis is

"hysterical" by nature (327). Psychologically and emotionally ill, Sylvia is a patient of "distress" and not of any nerve disorder (Furst 129). As the story discloses, the audience realises that it is not just the Germans that cause this agony—Sylvia has remained emotionally distraught for more than twenty years in her married life with Phillip— a long stretch of time with no sexual or emotional adequacy. She sees in her husband a Nazi, a dictator, who crushes the innocent to establish his authority. Thus, in the terror and torture of the Jews, Sylvia finds a reflection of her own misery: she relates the Nazi threat to her husband's despotism in their marriage. Incessantly reading the news of these persecutions, Sylvia has become paralysed.

On a fundamental level, *Broken Glass* narrates the story of the Gellburgs' lives, but symbolically, the play is a creative exploration of the paralysis that gripped America in 1938. Through this minuscule demonstration of the destruction caused by the Nazi regime, the playwright exhibits the consequence of lack of a clear human conscience and morality. It is indeed Miller's reaction to the willing ignorance adopted by his country when the Jews were being publically tortured and killed in Nazi Germany. Many a time, when discoursing on the "indifference" ingrained in the American nation, the playwright quoted the example of the German liner, St. Louis, in which over 900 German Jews set sail to find a safe abode, away from the atrocities of Hitler's forces, but found no help.

In his book, *The Unfinished Business: A Concise History of the American People*, Alan Brinkley speaks about how this doomed "ship without a port" often emerges as a "symbol of indifference" practiced by America and several other nations such as Cuba, where the boarders sought and were refused refuge (632). This shipload of Jews was refused entry by the US State Department—an indifference which can be seen as a "considerable moral failure" (632). Perhaps a resounding echo of what Miller wishes to convey through Sylvia's character in the play can be found in one of the most famous speeches by holocaust survivor, writer, and Nobel Laureate, Elie Wiesel:

> Roosevelt was a good man, with a heart. He understood those who needed help. Why didn't he allow these refugees to disembark? A thousand people—in America, the great country, the greatest democracy, the most generous of all new nations in modern history. What happened? I don't understand. Why the indifference, on the highest level, to the suffering of the victims? (213)

According to Terry Otten, "paralysis symbolizes the moral impotency that arrests all the characters in the play" (231). Hence, to understand Miller's portrayal, it is essential

to view Sylvia's paralysis as an embodiment of the amalgamated guilt shared by all characters of the play who represent both "public and private, corporate and individual betrayals" (230). At its heart, *Broken Glass* is the story of human betrayal, which was planned to be delivered on stage as a "series of blows" (Rifkin 53). According to Miller, all characters of the play are deficient in "courage or insight for truthfulness" (56).

Sylvia Gellburg may be the focal point of this paralysis, but other characters that surround her are also evidently numbed to themselves and others. By leading lives of complete insensitivity and ignorance, they replicate America's inaction and lack of active support towards the Jewish cause: according to Sylvia's family and friends, it is not her "business" to worry about the German Jews:

> SYLVIA (*pause, she stares ahead)*: They are making old men crawl around and clean the sidewalks with toothbrushes.
> HARRIET: Who is?
> SYLVIA: In Germany. Old men with beards!
> HARRIET: So why are you so interested in that? What business of yours is that? (*CP* 335)

Sylvia's husband, her doctor, her sister and her husband, choose to remain oblivious to the Jewish situation in Germany, but all of them collectively worry about Sylvia's condition. Completely ill-informed of facts, they blame it on the newspapers. Even Margaret Hyman, Dr. Hyman's wife in the play, who is not directly related to Sylvia, feels that to worry so much about the German Jews, is not "sane" on Sylvia's part:

> MARGARET: Getting this hysterical about something on the other side of the world is sane?
> HYMAN: When she talks about it, it's not the other side of the world it's on the next block.
> MARGARET: And that's sane?
> HYMAN: I don't know what it is! I just get the feeling sometimes that she *knows* something, something that . . . It's like she's connected to some . . . some wire that goes half around the world, some truth that other people are blind to. (360-61)

The common Jewish belief held before and during the Holocaust was that the Germans being so highly "educated" and "cultured" will not be resorting to genocide (Plunka 14), which is an attitude clearly embodied in Dr. Hyman's character in the play. "This will all pass, Sylvia. German music and literature is some of the greatest in the world; it's impossible for those people to suddenly change into thugs like this" (*CP* 370), Hyman says reassuringly to his patient, unable to understand the severity of the situation, thus exposing both his lack of insight and foresight. Sylvia's husband also displays a similar

misunderstanding of the situation; Phillip feels perplexed as to why his wife cannot understand that in attacking the Jews "those Germans are shooting at the sun!" (382). Like many other Jews, he is reassured of the fact that the Jewish community cannot ever be "destroyed" by the Nazis (382).

History is testimony to how a very "cultured" people, the Germans, slaughtered innocent men, women, and children, assuming a sense of racial superiority, and America chose not to interfere. However, one important aspect of *Broken Glass* is that Miller does not portray Nazism as a German but a universal attitude: everyone has their own Nazi, and persecution, no matter how unjust, appears to be the common human attitude:

> HYMAN: . . . *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. Everybody's persecuted— sometimes I wonder, maybe that's what holds this country together! (384)

The physician evidently interprets Nazi oppression of the German Jews as something "endemic to the modern psyche in which everyone feels persecuted" (Plunka 23) and yet, he fails to see how serious is the threat to Jewish community in Germany— as he is himself swayed by the "cultured" image of the Germans.

"Non-action", according to Miller, irrespective of the logic guiding it, becomes destructive if it ignores other harmful actions taking place around it (Abbotson, "Issues" 95). The play attacks the human tendency to sleep in silence and helplessness, numb to the crimes that are being committed on our streets every day, and awakens one to the individual and social weaknesses of our routine existence that we choose to ignore because it is usually convenient to play blind and deaf.

The Gellburgs have a sexually and emotionally impotent marriage and Sylvia and Phillip, like America and the rest of the world, have chosen to stay silent and ignorant to these prominent problems of their lives. What Miller wishes to highlight in all of these selected plays is that brokenness and numbness, whether overtly visible or covert, are harmful to human existence and must therefore be addressed with an urgency. Phillip Gellburg may not be confined to a wheelchair like his spouse, but everything about his personality and behaviour echoes paralysis. Sometimes proud of being successful despite his Jewish origin and sometimes ashamed of it, Phillip has been living in complete denial of his real identity. There are moments in the play where he appears to be a "self-hating" Jew[vii]. In fact, Phillip's sexual inability is indicative of his rejection of himself, the rejection

whose effect is so fatal that it has completely destroyed his marriage with Sylvia. He uses his obsession over work as a sort of escape from the uncomfortable aspects of his life, such as being a Jew in America, and the sexual and emotional impotence of his marriage. If not more, Phillip is as emotionally immobile as his wife.

Arthur Miller himself once remarked that Phillip Gellburg is in denial of everything: "he is denying his ethnicity, his Jewishness, and he is denying his wife's love as well" (qtd in Bigsby, *Critical* 392), but quite noticeably, his denial runs parallel to his society's lack of self-confrontation. America has never properly addressed its underlying anti-Semitism, just like the country has conveniently overlooked several other important issues. Sylvia's mysterious paralysis and the disappointment and anguish associated with Gellburgs' marriage are just symbolic of how when problems and prejudices are left unaddressed, they colossally contribute to human trauma and despair.

A victim of domestic and emotional violence, the Jewish-American housewife has been living as a captive in her household. Miller's narration clearly asserts that it is Phillip's suppression of his Jewishness that forces Sylvia to view herself as a persecuted German Jew and relate the Nazi threats to her "despotic husband's coldness" (Strickland "Latest Message"). So strongly does Sylvia fear Phillip that he has become a part of her recurrent nightmares, in which she sees a throng of people chasing after her, among whom there is a man who catches her and tries to molest her:

> SYLVIA: . . . He gets on top of me, and begins kissing me . . . (*Breaks off.*)
> HYMAN: Yes?
> SYLVIA: . . . 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.
> HYMAN: Who is it?
> SYLVIA: . . . I don't know.
> HYMAN: But you saw his face.
> SYLVIA: I think it's Phillip. (*Pause.*) But how could Phillip be like . . . he was almost like one of the others? (*CP* 366)

"Freud proposed that the human psyche has an area into which go all those desires and fantasies that cannot be expressed. This area he termed the unconscious" (Nayar 65). According to psychoanalytic theory, many forbidden and punished impulses of childhood are repressed but remain in the "unconscious"; however, they are often expressed as dreams, slips of tongue, jokes, and neurotic signs— and sometimes even as artistic and literary expressions.

> Dreams are not to be likened to the unregulated sounds that rise from a musical instrument struck by the blow of some external force instead: of by a player's hand; they are not meaningless., they are not absurd; they do not imply that one portion is beginning to wake. On the contrary, they are psychical phenomena of complete validity . . . (Freud 122)

Examination of dreams is indeed one of the most noteworthy influences of Freud in the domain of psychoanalysis. In psychoanalytic therapy, the method of "free association" and "dream analysis" are used to uncover the patients' unconscious, repressed motives and impulses. In one of his substantial lectures delivered at Worcester, Massachusetts in 1909, Freud expressed:

> The interpretation of dreams is in fact the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious; it is the securest foundation of psycho-analysis and the field in which every worker must acquire his convictions and seek his training. If I am asked how one can become a psycho-analyst, I reply: 'By studying one's own dreams.' (qtd in Forrester 180)

According to Freudian "pleasure principle", it is almost instinctive for our "mental processes" to avoid any kind of discomfort or pain— for human psyche naturally leans towards experiencing "pleasure"; and dreams often help us in attaining that "wish fulfilment" and the resultant pleasure (Sugarman 9). In "Beyond the Pleasure Principle", Freud theorises that nightmares "serve to divert the dreamer from dangerous wishes" whose realisation would mean "frightening consequences"; they are unique in the sense that on one hand, they embody the "dreamer's perception of the danger" and on another, they mask the dreamer's "wish" (9). He considered nightmares to be direct upshots of a "repressed unconscious"; in fact, in chronic nightmares, there lies a fulfilment of one's "masochistic wishes" (Bulkeley 146).

According to psychotherapists and researchers, Wooster and Wilson, Sylvia's depression, which is otherwise potently yet obliquely visible in the form of her paralysed legs, is not completely realised until she narrates her recurrent nightmare to her doctor (187). Phillip's "cut-offness" from basic human empathy is clearly visible in his relationship with his spouse; the "cut off breasts" Sylvia sees in her nightmares are symbolic of the same (187). Most educated people at the turn of the 20th century "derogated the use of dreams for peering into the future" because of its status as a superstition (Sand 727). However, denunciation of a "superstition" does not imply that the same people could not give value to the fact that "dreams revealed aspects of character or motive" (727).

Sylvia's physician not only makes use of the Freudian "talking cure" [viii] but also his theory related to the interpretation of dreams, without ever mentioning Freud in the play. Yet, despite Sylvia's evident victimization, Miller does not wish to portray her only as a victim: she is also an oppressor— of herself and others too. In fact, in the entire play, there is an unquestionable reverberation of what the playwright explicitly wants to convey to his audience: "an event like the Holocaust involves everyone; there can be no turning away without cost" (Abbotson, "Issues"95). Therefore, in the Holocaust of Sylvia's life, she also holds responsibility like everyone else. It a challenge for the audience to view any character of the play, including Sylvia, in absoluteness: the oppressor here, appears oppressed.

There has been enough debate on how at the time of *Kristallnacht,* the Jews in Nazi Germany chose to remain inactive to Nazi threats. There are scholars who claim that the Jewish community at large lacked an understanding of the seriousness of the matter as they followed the Nazi orders during deportation. Recognizing the futility of any resistance or revolt, they found it convenient to be paralysed (Plunka 14). Likewise, Sylvia has remained numb to the dictatorial attitude of her husband, first becoming emotionally and eventually, physically paralysed. She abdicates her responsibility towards herself, seeking pleasure in her sickness (Furst 130). Sylvia seems to be deriving a kind of masochistic pleasure out of her illness, which according to Lilian R. Furst, is a classic case of a psychiatric condition known as "*la belle indifference*", in which the patient shows an evident "lack of concern" for the symptoms of her "conversion disorder" [ix] (130).

Even though panic-stricken about the condition of the German Jews, Sylvia has unfortunately failed to see the "emergency" of her personal situation. As a passive victim of her marital tortures, Sylvia, like the Jews in Europe, exhibits a lack of "selfhood" (Plunka 18) and "personal identity" (17). Her paralysed legs indicate the lack of a solid ground under her feet and depict her lack of stability; Sylvia's image on stage, whether in a wheelchair or in a bed is a "graphic visual representation" of her infirmity (Furst 130). Miller here is not favouring the prey but he rather chooses to show his seeming victims also as persecutors.

Out of the two central male characters of the play, Phillip and Hyman, the audience is naturally bound to view the latter as relatively more balanced and simpler. Dr. Harry Hyman defies the Jewish stereotype to a great extent; being a flamboyant horse-riding Jew, Hyman appears happy and comfortable. But on digging deeper, the flaws of his personality surface clearly: he has not been committed to his marriage, which keeps his wife disappointed in him. Despite his comparatively better education, understanding, and

exposure, the physician is also as ignorant of the plight of the German Jews as the other characters in the play. Having completed his medical studies in Germany, he thinks highly of the Germans—thus showing his lack of understanding of the situation. As a physician also, Hyman definitely appears loose on professional medical ethics as through Sylvia, he satisfies both his medical and sexual inquisitiveness. The audience sees him try hard to solve the emotional riddles of Sylvia's life by offering her "talk therapy" and by touching her with love and tenderness. His efforts certainly invigorate Sylvia to speak more openly to him, yet, despite his right intentions to cure her paralysis, Hyman further intensifies the rift between the Gellburgs, causing visible distress to Margaret as well:

> MARGARET: I think you've got to get somebody on this who won't be carried away, Harry.
> HYMAN: I am not carried away!
> MARGARET: You really believe that Sylvia Gellburg is being threatened by these Nazis? . . .
> HYMAN: . . . Margaret—she knows something! . . . I tell you it's real.
> MARGARET: What an interesting life you have, Harry. (*CP* 360-61)

In Christopher Bigsby's opinion, Sylvia's doctor fails to see the complications of his own personality and it is certainly so for "his compassion and his sexuality are connected" (*Critical* 395). Hyman's clandestine behaviour is just a reflection of his desire to attain the self-importance he enjoyed in his youth when he courted many women (Abbotson,"Issues" 96). He is a man who takes great interest in "asking questions of others" but fails to question his own motivations (96). Therefore, in Abbotson's view, Hyman can neither be trusted in his "sexuality" nor in his "sense of responsibility" (96).

On the whole, *Broken Glass* awakens human conscience to the several hostilities people perform against themselves and others in their everyday lives. It is because of these hostilities that Sylvia Gellburg is in a wheelchair and by the end of the play, Phillip Gellburg is also driven to a sick bed after he collapses with a major heart attack in his boss, Mr. Case's office. These physical shocks push the Jewish-American couple to finally acknowledge the pressures they have been exerting on themselves for years. Sylvia's immobility thus becomes a trigger for self-realizations for the couple.

However, Sylvia's guilt-ridden mental state about the Holocaust is "moot" unless she decides something to help herself (Plunka 18). The ending of *Broken Glass* has been changed in its different versions: Phillip dies in some, and in others, he survives. Almost always, the ending is left ambiguous by the playwright. According to Bigsby, whether

Phillip dies or survives this turmoil is indeed unimportant; what matters is that Phillip has been able to introspect and accept his Jewishness, his identity, and Sylvia is finally able to stand on her feet and is able to "take her life in her hands" (*Critical* 402). Another notable thing is that even though in different versions of the play, Phillip's fate varies, yet, in all of them, Sylvia is able to get rid of the wheelchair. She is able to defeat the impotence of her life (Baanders 213), and ready herself to take command—for her own sake, not for her mother's, Jerome's or Phillip's.

The Last Yankee is set in a mental institution. Martin Gottfried tags it as probably the only "problem play" by Arthur Miller—the play being a discussion of the problem of clinical depression (435). Through this dramatic piece set entirely at a state mental facility, the playwright implies hitting at the larger social issue of mental sickness that is on the rise in America; Miller's characters and his portrayal demonstrate how insanity has become the last shelter of numerous American men and women (Abbotson, *Critical* 25). "More hospital beds in the United States are occupied by depressives than any other disease, by far", the playwright says, concerned about the problem of clinical depression (Bigsby, *Company* 204).

Structurally, it is a one-act play divided into two scenes. In the first, we see the depressives' husbands, John Frick and Leroy Hamilton, sitting in the hospital's waitingroom, waiting patiently to go through to their respective wives. In the second scene (which was added in the 1993 version of the play), we see the two depressives, Karen and Patricia inside the patient wards; they are later joined by their partners. It is certainly not a realistic presentation of a hospital as we do not really see any doctors or nurses on stage.

At the commencement of Scene 2 of the play, the audience encounters on stage an unnamed character, a female depressive, who *"lies motionless with one arm over her eyes*" (*CP* 292). The playwright also indicates that this woman "*will not move throughout the scene*" (292). In a revision of the same play, done a year later, Miller changed the stage directions for this character, indicating that before the curtain falls finally, she "*stirs, then falls back and remains motionless*" as "*a stillness envelops the whole stage*" (316).

The unnamed, motionless patient of the play is a reflection of a numbed and helpless humanity, shrieking to us loud and clear through her silence that not everyone who seeks therapy gets cured. According to Hans Osterwalder, the immobile patient of the play stands for the actual state of America, where the possible recovery of one patient does not mean a permanent betterment for the majority—it is indeed just a "temporary respite" (323). In one of his interviews, Arthur Miller calls the anonymous woman symbolic of

"normal defeat", highlighting the fact that not everyone can be cured at mental institutions (Centola, "Yankee" 91). Her miserable state serves as an indication, a warning to other female depressives such as Patricia Hamilton and Karen Frick, of what might become of them if they did not take themselves out of this state— if they did not face life as it is (91). Thus, almost as some "pure Beckett gesture", fighting the absurdity of life through her inertness (Bigsby, *Critical* 388), the nameless patient becomes an ominous company on stage. Patricia can end up as this woman and Karen, for now, appears to be moving fast towards this completely frozen state.

> KAREN: I feel ashamed.
> PATRICIA: For heaven's sake, why? You've got a right to be depressed. There's more people in hospitals because of depression than any other disease.
> KAREN: Is that true?
> PATRICIA: Of course! Anybody with any sense has got to be depressed in this country, unless you're really rich, I suppose. Don't let him shame you, dear.
> (*CP* 297)

Mental illness is indeed spreading in the world like some epidemic—more so in developed nations such as America, where people have all their basic needs meted out and yet, men and women lie depressed in hospital beds. As can be prominently observed, the characters in the selected plays exhibit repressive tendencies and all of their problems appear closely related to the problems of their society and their culture. Clinical depression is not a disease of the individual, only. The two female depressives of the play, Patricia and Karen, are also embodiments of the individual and social numbness that has become a part and parcel of the modern contemporary life. They are reminiscent of Sylvia Gellburg from *Broken Glass* as their depression is also directly connected to that of the men they are married to and the environments they live in.

Miller subtly pinpoints how the problem of clinical depression is closely knitted in these depressives' upbringing, their current social set-up, and their marital and familial relations. As underlined by the playwright, mental illness is simply a manifestation of what has been going on silently in these women's psyche for much longer, started probably in their childhood or youth, which is now triggered by the unhappy state of their respective marriages and lives in general—all symptoms now strongly manifest and chronic.

Karen and Patricia, like most others at this state facility, have been put on antidepressants, the highest selling drug in the United States. David Karp in his book, *Is It Me or My Meds?: Living with Antidepressants*, suggests that this explosive sale of anti-depressants in America just indicates that a majority of Americans see these "pills" as

remedy to their problems (98). Antidepressants relieve people of the responsibility of how they feel about themselves and their circumstances, rendering them powerless (104). Karp quotes some really disturbing data related to the skyrocketing sale of prescription drugs/ psychiatric medicines in America (214). In the discussion that Karp offers on the subject, he does not deny that some people might actually need medication but worries about an average human's dependence on such pills for everyday happiness. When numerous Americans sign up for "psychotropic medications", they provide "medical pioneers freer access to their minds and feelings" (219). By giving into the strategies of pharmaceutical companies, Americans appear to be "moving closer to normalizing the idea that virtually any feelings short of complete happiness are unacceptable" (219).

In *Happy Pills in America: From Miltown to Prozac,* David Herzberg states that by the turn of the twenty first century, "the notion that pills could restore selfhood" had become commonplace and was massively accepted in America's "popular as well as medical culture" (1). In a chapter titled, "Prozac and the Incorporation of the Brain", Herzberg discusses about how Prozac, a prescription drug, "catapulted" to great success in America in the late 1980s and 1990s (150).

In analysing *The Last Yankee,* one must not lose track of the fact that here Miller is not discussing the problem of clinical depression as a psychiatric condition but only as a social and cultural problem. In Miller's portrayal, human beings appear helpless and broken—and the society's fabric damaged. Almost as if in some "recoil from life", the two depressives of Miller's play emanate incomprehension and bitterness (Bigsby, *Cambridge* 174). Patricia Hamilton has been struggling with depression for the last twenty years and this is her third time in the hospital while Karen Frick, the older depressive, is here for the first time.

Through these two couples, who come from varying social, familial, and economic formats, Miller brings forth varied images of emotional numbness and vacuum prevalent in America. The Fricks are the older, richer, and childless couple in the play while the younger couple, the Hamiltons, have a large family of seven children.

While the Fricks own an oil business of their own, the Hamiltons live on a carpenter's wages, which are never sufficient to make ends meet. The two couples in the play suffer "insufficiency" and "disappointment" as the world is certainly not what they expected it to be (176). *The Last Yankee* is thus a metaphor for the overall American experience—the magnificent dream and its sad failure (174).

It is mainly through the characters' dialogue with one another (the men's in the waiting-room and women's inside the wards) that we get to know the background of this illness in their lives. Frick comments that the hospital has a "one hell of a parking lot" (*CP* 291), which is a symbolic implication on Miller's part to show how mental illness has expanded in the recent years. Also, the conversation between Leroy and Frick, that begins normally, does not reach a very amicable end as the two men clearly have a clash of basic values. While Frick is a rich, "go-getter", having worked all his life in the attainment of his big, American Dream, Leroy, despite hailing from a respectable line of Alexander Hamilton[x], chooses to stay a simple carpenter. What Miller wants to pinpoint is that irrespective of their contrasting values, the two men are sitting in a mental institution, suffering the impact of being surrounded by a culture that suffers a massive lack of basic human values.

Leroy's wife, the daughter of Swedish-American immigrants, constantly compares Leroy, to her own brothers who according to her were the most perfect examples of "achievers": ". . . but my brothers . . . I mean the way they stood, and walked . . . and their teeth! Charles won the All-New England golf tournament, and Buzz came within a tenth of an inch of the gold medal in the pole vault—that was in the Portugal Olympics" (300). Both her "achiever" brothers committed suicide while Patricia herself, a one-time beauty pageant winner, has stayed clinically depressed for most of her adult life. Despite showing great promise in her teenage years, Patricia suffers the despair of a failed American Dream.

> PATRICIA: Oh, they're all gone now.
> KAREN: Moved away?
> PATRICIA: No . . . dead.
> KAREN: Oh my. They overstrain?
> PATRICIA: Buzz hung himself on his wife's closet door.
> KAREN: Oh my!
> PATRICIA: Eight days later Charles shot himself on the tractor. (300)

Like her dead brothers, Patricia also suffers "disappointment", which according to Bigsby is the "keynote of her life" (*Cambridge* 174). When the younger depressive is first seen by the audience, she appears as a woman trying hard to take control of her situation: after years of clinical depression and several regular visits to the mental institution, Patricia is now weaning herself of psychiatric drugs, of course without her doctor's knowledge. She seems to have come to a basic understanding that psychiatric medicines have just made her dependent without actually having helped her condition at all; now she wants to go home "clean". She admits to being less delusional now and even Leroy feels the same when he

sees her; it has already been three weeks without medication. Feeling more alive and sane, Patricia regrets having been on medication for all these years. Also, despite her various misgivings, she is finally able to realise the sacrifices Leroy and her seven children have had to make because of her sickness:

> PATRICIA: . . . Dear God, when I think of him hanging in there all these years . . . I'm so ashamed. But at the same time he's absolutely refused to make any money, every one of our children has had to work since they could practically write their names. I can't be expected to applaud, exactly. *Presses her eyes*. I guess sooner or later you just have to stand up and say "I'm normal, I made it." But it's like standing at the head of a stairs and there's no stairs. (*CP* 295)

Moving from one church to the other, Patricia has been struggling to practice faith, which has not helped her either. Unable to look inward for answers, she chooses to remain annoyed at Leroy, blaming him for his lack of ambition; absolutely blind to the fact that it is the same aspiration that resulted in her brothers' deaths and her own deterioration. While Patricia suffers in the aftermath of a failed American Dream, Leroy Hamilton, despite his humble ambitions, suffers a different form of helplessness in the modern materialistic America. A carpenter by choice and profession, Leroy struggles with the various pressures of an American life that he refuses to be a part of:

> FRICK: Well coming from an old family like that—how do you come to being a carpenter?
> LEROY: Just . . . liked it.
> FRICK: Father a carpenter?
> LEROY: No.
> FRICK: What was your father?
> LEROY: Lawyer.
> FRICK: Why didn't you?
> LEROY: Just too dumb, I guess. (289)

Leroy's almost monosyllabic response to Frick's demeaning questions narrate the story of his life as a manual labourer in America. Under various marital and social pressures, Leroy feels forced to ask for more money for his work. With a large family of seven children, the carpenter is indeed expected to aim higher so that the Hamiltons are able to pay their bills on time, thinks the carpenter's wife.

Karen Frick has recently overdosed on some medicines—which has brought her to the mental health care facility. Even though the playwright does not give us any such clear indication in the story, Karen's overdose of medicines could be a possible suicide attempt. When compared to Patricia, Karen appears to be a bigger complication on stage: the

audience finds it difficult to trace the exact source of her melancholy. According to Susan Abbotson, Karen suffers a "crippling lack of self-esteem" and does not have a clear connection to her life and her past ("Reconnecting" 59). She confides in Patricia about how she loves farming and how sad it is that her mother left her abandoned and rootless by leaving their family farm to a cousin, thus rejecting her daughter in a way (*CP* 299). When she talks to Patricia, she severely struggles to remember details of her life; it is saddening to encounter Karen's feeling of homelessness. Having spent most of her adult life as a dependent on her husband, Karen is unable to take independent decisions for herself. When left alone to decide anything, she goes numb; her identity thus intermingled with her husband's, who fails to understand her. John Frick's understanding of Karen's illness is confined to his wife not being "normal" anymore:

> FRICK: . . . but the woman can stand in one place for half an hour at a time practically without moving.
> PATRICIA: Well that's the sickness, you see.
> FRICK: I realise that. But she won't even go shopping . . .
> PATRICIA: You see? You're sounding disappointed. (312)

A money-chasing businessman, John Frick, lacks the clarity to understand both himself and others. He is unable to help his partner because he fails to clearly comprehend her condition. His embarrassment at his wife's illness, at her hobby of tap-dancing, and his discomfort with visiting her at the mental institution, are all quite obvious to the audience. He hides Karen's hobby from people and when she speaks, he constantly interrupts her, rendering her nervous, realizing little that she needs his love and support. Even though Frick reluctantly agrees to sing for her when Karen dances, the way he sings reflects his impatience with his wife; he is not appreciative of her efforts and cannot control his temper. Irritated by Patricia's comments and her plea to be more encouraging of Karen, Frick exits in the middle of his wife's performance, completely failing to provide the connection that Karen needs and wants for her recovery. Karen is visibly afraid and nervous in his presence:

> FRICK *(hard-pressed, explodes)*: *I am looking at her, goddamit!*
> *(this astonishing furious shout, his reddened face, stops everything. A look of fear is on Karen's face.)*
> KAREN *(apologetically to* PATRICIA): He *was* looking at me . . .
> (To FRICK) She didn't mean you *weren't* looking, she meant . . . (314)

Similarly, even Scene 1 of the play, in which Frick is seen waiting at the hospital's lobby, highlights his arrogant attitude towards other human beings. Despite Frick's attempts to

sound caring and polished, Leroy Hamilton can sense the condescension in his tone and is well aware that being a rich businessperson, Frick looks down upon manual labours.

All four characters of *The Last Yankee* appear to be struggling with various complexities of modern American life. "You're fifty times more depressed than I am" (304), Patricia taunts Leroy but the audience sees Leroy as the only character in the play successfully devising ways to deal with his emotional troubles despite living amongst people who fail to respect him for who he is as an individual. He works hard to ignore the pressures that his "important and famous" lineage imposes on him, the pressures that are typically American by nature. Patricia is both irritated and intrigued at Leroy's lack of competitiveness:

> PATRICIA: There was something else you said. About standing on line.
> LEROY: On line?
> PATRICIA: That you'll always be at the head of the line because . . . (*Breaks off*).
> LEROY: I'm the only one on it.
> PATRICIA: . . . Is that really true? You do compete, don't you? You must, at least in your mind?
> LEROY: Only with myself. We're really all on a one-person line, Pat. I learned that in these years. (306)

In a country where success is constantly measured in terms of what car one drives, the emotional dislocation of Leroy's wife and his country at large, is bound to rub off on Leroy Hamilton also. In fact, Leroy comes across as Miller's mouthpiece in the play— a perfect example of how to do deal with the pressures rampant in modern America. By simply refusing to be a part of the materialistic rat race, the carpenter proves it to the audience that one's basic joys are indeed quite basic. He finds his spirituality in skiing and not in religion or churches; in a warm bath, in his work, in playing his banjo, and in living happily with his seven children:

> LEROY: Yes, and skiing! To me spiritual is whatever makes me forget myself and feel happy to be alive. Like even a well-sharpened saw, or a perfect compound joint.
> PATRICIA: Maybe this is why we can't get along—spiritual is nothing you can see, Leroy.
> LEROY: Really! Then why didn't God make everything invisible! We are in this world and you're going to have to find some way to love it! (309-10)

Unlike Frick, Leroy is also very supportive of his depressed wife despite the various blames she puts on him for her unhappiness. Rebuilding the past through his renovation works of old-style buildings, Leroy may never become the man people such as Patricia and

Frick would idolise. He may never fit the typical American mould of progress but what matters is that he manages to live happier than others around himself. He has been consistent in his marital commitment to Patricia, which she also seems to be realising now.

According to Abbotson, Patricia and Leroy reach a sort of "compromise" towards the end, which may only be for the time being, but for now, it seems enough to make them find peace in their leaving together for home ("Reconnecting" 74). For the Hamiltons, it is a happy ending—a happy beginning rather, but Bigsby draws our attention to how at the end of this play, there is no "movement" but only "stasis" (*Cambridge* 176): Karen Frick, who had gone out to look for her husband after he left in anger has not returned and the other woman on stage, who lies motionless throughout the play, remain as they were while Patricia and Leroy begin moving. The happy e[x]it of the Hamiltons is thus overshadowed by the silence and stillness that remains on stage—an image of paralysed humanity. Thus, in its entirety, this play "addresses both disappointment and belief in American life and it prospects" (Kurdi 64).

Maria Kurdi draws attention to how the subject of clinical depression, specifically female depression bears an autobiographical connection in Miller's dramatic sphere. It is certainly a condition that he experienced first-hand through the women closest to himself. In his growing years, the playwright saw glimpses of it in his own mother, Augusta Miller and later in Marilyn Monroe, his second wife, in whom he encountered a massive explosion of the same problems (64). Monroe constantly struggled with depression and suicidal tendencies; the actress died prematurely at age thirty-six due to an overdose of pills in 1962, which was over a year after her divorce from Arthur Miller in 1961.

Finishing the Picture, an autobiographical play, is based on Arthur Miller's experiences while filming *The Misfits,* the 1961 Hollywood movie in which the playwright and Marilyn Monroe, worked together—she as the main female lead and he as the film's screenwriter. It is remarkable how Miller revisits these experiences in the final play of his life, produced at 88 years of age. *Finishing the Picture* is not only Miller's critique on a small unit of the American film industry but on a country and culture fast losing their sense of right and wrong, on men and women whose morals and ethics are sold out at a very small price. It is not only about a film team's efforts at finishing the picture: it is a "study of power" and of "the price of creativity" in the contemporary world (Bigsby, *Critical* 437).

It is indeed a telling commentary on a seemingly "progressive" country where the price of human life is calculated in plain dollars and nothing else. Through this last produced play of his life, the playwright attacks the egotistical, conceited, and shallow

nature of the American film industry that objectifies stars such as Monroe for their vested interests. Numbness and depression are nothing but by-products of a culture that promotes people like products in an extremely dehumanising way.

During the filming of *The Misfits*, Monroe and Miller were going through the final breakdown of their marital union, and in a way, though legally still a married couple, the two had already become "misfits" to each other. And since Miller depicts through the play the personal experiences he had on the film's sets, he owns the advantage of showing the American film people quite realistically. Also, quite tactfully, he punches into the play some political details of the times in which this play's main action is set, thus obliquely highlighting the political paralysis gripping America in the 1960s at the time of Kennedy-Nixon elections. A glimpse of what Miller aims to convey can be traced in the following conversation between the producer and director of Kitty's film:

> OCHSNER: . . . what is exactly wrong with her? —I mean to look at her she's the picture of health.
> DEREK: She is a case of terminal disappointment. With herself, her husband, the movies, the United States, the world.
> OCHSNER: Well that sounds like most of us. But why? It seems to me she's got everything. She must be the envy of ninety percent of humanity.
> DEREK: So is the United States—why are so many of us unhappy? . . . (*CP* 512)

Kitty, the American sex icon and actress, a character based on Monroe, is seen unclothed and drugged in the very first scene of the play; the audience does not see her again until the end when she completely collapses under pressure. The stark-naked Kitty roaming about the hotel lobby is tucked safely into bed by Edna Meyers, her assistant. There is a forest fire spreading at a distance from the hotel in Nevada where the crew members of Kitty's delayed movie lodge; the sky is completely lit up with a fire spreading in the nearby forest.

The shoot is five weeks delayed and on Kitty are staked tons of dollars; Philip Ochsner, a trucking magnate turned movie financer, is worried like everyone else. Kitty eats ice cream for breakfast, pops all sorts of pills, and roams about undressed. She may be a miserable mess but the picture must be finished; intermittently losing and gaining lucidity, Kitty refuses to leave her bed while all other characters try to persuade her— to perform, to resume the film shoot. On the playwright's part, it seems to be a rather mindful choice to give Kitty no lines to speak. Only in the initial version of the play, a very delusional Kitty asks Edna, "But where is this place? Where is Flora? What happened to my strawberries? . . ." (506). Thus, to the audience, Kitty remains a cryptic hushed entity till the end; the air

of mystery surrounding this beautiful yet deteriorating actress is intensified because the audience can only hear what other characters say to her and nothing of what she says to them. Like the unnamed, motionless female depressive of *The Last Yankee,* Miller yet again attempts at depicting silenced humanity in a dehumanising environment. The numb and immobile Kitty bears testimony to the selfish and damaging nature of the film and media industries of America, whose callousness Miller personally experienced both through his work as a screenwriter and his marriage to one of the greatest stars of the twentieth century. Everyone wants something out of Kitty: she is the name they drop, the star they follow, and also the money and reputation they might lose if the picture is not finished.

Being a movie star followed by millions, Kitty is certainly in a position of power as on her depends whether or not this picture will be finished, and yet to the audience, she appears to be a victim. Despite her power, Kitty is completely powerless; her misery lies in being surrounded by vultures who just want profits from her. They cajole her and bribe her to get to work; according to Abbotson, Kitty is less of a person and more of a screen or mirror that reflects the inner "desires, fears, and needs" of the characters that address her throughout the play (*Critical* 164). Egerton expresses a similar view: "by Miller's design", Kitty remains a "mute and mystical cipher" till the end, and therefore, serves as "the canvas on which they paint; a rare commodity, but a commodity all the same" ("Reno" 20).

Despite her desperate need for love and affection at the moment, Kitty's power as a star cancels all chances of her receiving anything of the sort (Abbotson, *Critical* 164). She is her "performance", entirely lacking "self"; in fact, her "fragility is part of her charm, and to negate that would make her less marketable. (164).

Miller himself described his play to be all about "the power relationship between Kitty and those who are both dependent on her and in conflict with her" (165). In many of his interviews, Miller has spoken of Monroe as a victim of a difficult life and a very powerful media image. In *Timebends*, he talks about her star power, saying, "there was some madness to the desperation of their need for her. What frightening power she had!" (459). The playwright lived very close to this "power" and knew well its dangers; Marilyn Monroe was indeed "bludgeoned by a culture that asked only enticement of her" (425).

Kitty is said to have been observed by two eminent analysts who have not been able to help her condition. Her loss and gain of clarity can directly be related to Karen Frick's, who, as reported by her husband, just stands in front of the mirror and does not move at all, for hours altogether. Kitty, like Karen, has become a "broken down car" (Abbotson, *Critical* 219), that is of no use to her husband or anyone else; her deteriorating psychological state

has suddenly tagged her a bad investment. These women do not react to people anymore, the way "normal" human beings are expected to.

The most surprising fact is that the depressed lead of Miller's play is surrounded by people who are all aware of the harsh realities of her life but sympathy here seems to be in direct conflict with personal interest. Everyone's concern for Kitty is based primarily on vested interests: Philip Ochsner makes the effort of speaking to her analyst in New York, who feels the actor would be better off at the hospital. Even though the audience does not see any professional psychoanalyst counselling Kitty on stage, the crew members of the film try their hand at "talk therapy", but, regrettably, in an environment of cut throat competition and vested interests, care is also conditional. Everyone would like Kitty to rest for a while but only if she later gets back to work to finish the picture.

Derek Clemson, the director of the film, says about her to Ochsner, "she has had a frightful life . . . she's been stepping on broken glass since she could walk" (*CP* 513). Derek seems aware of how Kitty "has ghosts sitting on her chest" (514), yet, he is unable to sacrifice his selfish ambitions related to his forty-third movie as he has never had to shut a movie in his entire career. Therefore, Kitty must finish the picture.

Kitty's acting guru, Jerome Fassinger, in whom she shows immense hope and confidence, is especially flown in to reinvigorate her. He asserts that the actress is "not surrounded by culture or by love but exploitation, by people digging out pieces" of her "flesh". Yet, despite being her teacher, this self-obsessed guru dressed in cowboy attire, refuses to take responsibility for Kitty: he flies to the sets to see her only because his flight and expenses have been paid for in advance by Ochsner. Jerome is no better than the many people who surround Kitty, who according to him wish to "dig out pieces" of her. Fearing that it may put him in a tight spot in front of others, Jerome refrains from promising Kitty's recovery to anyone. He abandons his student as soon as he senses the situation getting out of hand.

Jerome's wife, Flora Fassinger, who takes care of Kitty's acting instruction in his absence, is another model of selfishness and insensitivity depicted by Miller. Her pride in her husband's actor-students, her irresponsibility towards Kitty and work in general, and her habit of assuming unwarranted importance, throw light on her superficiality and moral numbness. The Fassingers are strongly based on Lee and Paula Strasberg, the method acting gurus that Hollywood stars hired to help themselves appear "real" on screen. Miller always blamed the Strasbergs for pressuring his defenceless wife— "for imposing a soul-destroying regimen of method acting and method thinking" on her (Goldstein 188). He did

not like the excessive control these tutors exerted on the natural skills of a good actor as according to him, they obstructed a free flow between the director and his actors.

Another model of human immorality in the play is a character named Terry Case, the cinematographer of Kitty's film. Case feels Kitty should be dealt with firmness to get her to work again; he is insensitive enough to reduce her to an animal who must be tamed. He talks of her as if she is some fancy product with a desirable posterior, and believes that "actors respond best to threatening gestures" (*CP* 515)— stardom for Case is nothing but animalism. While other characters such as Derek, Paul, and Edna, trust Kitty's sense of honour, Case is clearly mistrustful of her: he suspects her of deliberately blowing lines on the sets to settle an ego score with the director. No other character in the play thinks as low of Kitty as Case does:

> EDNA: . . . But she does have a mind, you know.
> CASE: I'll try anything, Edna, but I can't photograph minds . . . what are we making here, some f***ing French movie? This is America! —The girl's got to glory in her flesh again! years ago—she could knock around all night . . . her face shining like a brand new apple . . .. Remember, Derek? (523)

Symbolising the moral paralysis of the film business, Case not only reduces Kitty to a merchandise, but demeans the very concept of art altogether, which is quite evident in the conversation between himself and Derek:

> DEREK . . . How simple it all was! Remember, Terry? When nobody in pictures talked about art? Certainly not in America. We just did it.
> CASE: The European bullshit took over. We made the pictures the whole world wanted, and they couldn't make them, so they talked about art. The Germans send me treatises that long about my camera work, my philosophy. I can't understand word-one . . .. What's there to say? —Get close so you can see the faces, get low so you get the ass. (524)

A face that inspires millions, Kitty now looks frozen on screen because of her drugged state; anti-depressants are doing their "magic" on yet another human being. The play unfolds to inform the audience about the downward slip in Kitty's personal life as well: her marriage with Paul, the screenwriter (a portrayal of Miller himself), is failing, along with her mental and physical health. Paul seems entirely exhausted and emotionally paralysed to an extent that he has completely given up on Kitty's case. Reminding the audience of the husband-characters of other selected later plays, John Frick and Phillip Gellburg, Paul is also absolutely inefficient in the face of the apparent emotional and

psychological corrosion of his wife. Despite his concern for Kitty, his understanding of her power as a star, and her needs as an individual, Paul is not able to resuscitate his wife:

> PAUL: . . .. There's a kind of monster walking step for step behind her whispering in her ear never to trust anyone; and the trouble is he has a point. Everyone wants something from her; we're no exceptions; we want a beautiful film, so we insist she wake up bright and fluffy even when she feels like dying—our careers, the months and years we put into this project are redeemed by her fluffiness . . . (526)

Abbotson likens the character of Paul to Torvald, Nora's husband in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, for being a man who can understand his wife's situation and still fails to help her and save her from the impending catastrophe (*Critical* 167-68). Paul is very worried when Derek informs him about the possibility of shutting Kitty's film; he knows that for Kitty, this one decision may mean ultimate destruction. However, Kitty refuses to even see his face and only screams when he enters her room (*CP* 544); despite being aware of the emergency of her situation, Paul speaks harshly to her instead of taking responsibility for her. His matter-of-fact speech to Kitty, "you are alone in this world, Kitty! Everything else is bullshit!" (545), even though resonating with truth, does nothing to help her condition.

While the crew members try to extract a performance out of Kitty, the American TV showcases debates between Nixon and Kennedy, the two contenders for the American presidential office. In a culture that stops feeling anything and goes only by what's shown on screens, what's real and what's not becomes fairly unpredictable—politicians are also reduced to performing actors in such a corrupt environment. "They are all terribly insecure. Life isn't real to movie people" (505); Edna's view equally holds true about American politicians and the people who raise them to power. A small political talk about Nixon and Kennedy included in the play, signals the fact that presidential business in America is also nothing short of show business:

> OCHSNER: Nixon could win, you know. He owns anti-Communism. But don't you think Kennedy was better on the issues?
> PAUL: I had a bottle of Scotch so I can't remember any issues. All I remember is that Kennedy's suit really fitted him, and Nixon, as somebody said, looked like they forgot to take the hanger out of his jacket . . . the fate of the world could hang on the vaudeville. The whole thing has turned into a show business. (517)

Paul recognizes it as "show business" and yet, he remembers only the suits the two contenders wore to the TV show and nothing about the debate. This reflects his own lack of political and national awareness and that of many other American citizens like himself, who look at TV screens and make decisions. In her book, *Showbiz Politics: Hollywood in*

American Political Life, Kathryn Cramer Brownell discusses how America's politics is simply "showbiz politics"—an arrangement that chiefly functions like some Hollywood production and relies heavily on mass media, consultancy, and advertising tools (4). She goes on to explore how "the electoral successes of John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan, and the media struggles of Richard Nixon" influenced other presidential candidates to use the strategies of "showbiz politics" to win elections (8). America's thirty-fifth president, John F. Kennedy, indeed turned into a "media celebrity to gain political legitimacy" (160), which is what the play subtly highlights.

Even though American politicians had been participating in this "showbiz" even before Kennedy-Nixon elections, Kennedy's electoral campaign, which clung heavily on TV and other broadcast tools to stay at the centre, "made show business knowledge an even more essential component of waging an electoral campaign" (170), and evidently, the impact continues. This oblique addition of country's political environment in the play is just another way of conveying the adverse impacts of rampant merchandizing of human beings that Miller witnessed in his country's overall culture—be it Hollywood or politics.

When *Finishing the Picture* begins, there is a fire raging in the forest nearby and Kitty is deteriorating; under immense pressure from all sides, the depressive is forced to get out of the bed to resume work. But what happens at the end of the play leaves everyone shocked because even though the forest fire is eventually brought under control, Kitty, despite her visible efforts to resume work, finally collapses. With the "analogy of the forest fire", Miller points at how the destruction caused by a single match can consume a person completely; and also how everyone around Kitty is responsible for her devastated life (Langteau 7).

She is to be hospitalised for "six days" as Ochsner decides for her (*CP* 553), after which the picture may or may not be finished. Like Karen and Patricia, Kitty will receive therapy and medicines at a mental institution now. Perhaps what Miller says about the climax and ending of *The Last Yankee* holds true for the ending of his last play as well:

> Indeed, short of suicide, the illness, properly speaking, never ends in the sense of tying all the loose strings, nor should the play, which simply sets the boundaries of the possible. For the theme is hope rather than completion or achievement, and hope is tentative always. (Miller, *CE* 526)

Just as *Finishing the Picture* brings to stage the stark-naked image of a deteriorating Kitty at the very start of the play, Miller's penultimate play, *Resurrection Blues* brings forth Jeanine: a woman clothed, yet absolutely raw and vulnerable in front of the audience.

Significantly, the play begins with a prologue: wrapped in bandages, Jeanine addresses the audience directly from her wheelchair, and talks about her suicide attempt and various other details of her surroundings, her family, and her country.

> JEANINE: Nothing to be alarmed about. I finally decided one morning, to jump out of my window. In this country even a successful suicide is difficult . . . I did not expect failure in my life. I failed as a revolutionary . . . even as a dope addict—one day the pleasure simply disappeared, along with my husband. We so badly need a revolution here . . . (*CP* 439)

Among Arthur Miller's selected later plays, *Resurrection Blues* is the only one with a prologue, and to elaborately fix the story line and background in front of the audience, the dramatist chooses to bring Jeanine to the centre stage, a young woman absolutely shattered and miserable. Like Sylvia Gellburg, Jeanine is confined to the wheelchair and like Kitty, Karen, and Patricia, she is emotionally numb and depressed. But Jeanine's immobility is not psychosomatic like Sylvia's—she is suicidal and her spirit is as broken as her bones. These wheelchair-confined female characters, Jeanine and Sylvia are the very "image of the paralysis" that harms them and their society (Bigsby, *Critical* 426). Carrying with her the heavy baggage of a failed revolution, a history of dope addiction, her husband's desertion of her in the midst of her crisis, Jeanine is a representation of melancholy and disillusionment. Yet, the current state of her country pains her more than her physical injuries or her personal problems; Jeanine realises the urgent need for a revolution to save her people.

Through the prologue, the audience is comprehensively informed about what has already happened, what is being planned, and what might happen if it is not stopped by anyone. In her brokenness, Jeanine talks about the agonizing state of affairs in her surroundings: "We were captured. They shot them all in thirty seconds . . . none of my people was over nineteen" (*CP* 440), she says. Felix Barriaux, Jeanine's uncle, who also happens to be the country's dictator, released her but his soldiers annihilated her "little brigade" of revolutionaries (440). Now Jeanine carries with her the "survivor's guilt"; and she is aware that "survival can be hard to live with" (440).

In the prologue itself, Jeanine informs the audience of a mysterious man named Ralph, who is shown in the play as a modern day "messiah":

> JEANINE: . . . I have a friend now. When I woke on the sidewalk he was lying beside me in my blood, embracing me and howling like a child in pain. He saved me. His love. He comes some nights and brings me honor for having fought . . .. Up

> in the mountains the people think he is the son of god. Neither of us is entirely sure of that . . . we'll have to wait and see . . . I am content . . . (440)

Resurrection Blues is a "Swiftean comedy" (Bigsby, *Critical* 426) that raises serious moral concerns and cynically throws light upon American callousness. It is a parody on the duplicity of the American government and its unserviceable interpolation in Latin America. The first world nations of the world such as America look down upon the people of the third world by referring to them as "uncivilised"; Miller ridicules this negative attitude. His portrayal and narration thoroughly mock America's perpetual arrogance and its unwarranted interference in the business of other nations—where its interest is mostly "commercial" (Abbotson, *Critical* 295). Specifically, the playwright's ridicule is targeted at America's corrupt culture of commercialism and its undependable broadcast media that thrives primarily on "sensationalism".

The plot of *Resurrection Blues* is confined to Ralph, the mysterious man who must be crucified, people who want his crucifixion, and people who don't. Thus presenting the prospect of a modern day crucifixion, which is about to be globally televised in an unnamed dictatorship, the play can be understood as a satirical commentary on modern times. Arthur Miller could never comprehend America's preoccupation with death penalty for serious criminals. In 1992, he wrote an article for the *New York Times*, titled, "Get It Right: Private Executions", which was a kind of "modest proposal" on the playwright's part.

> There can no longer be any doubt that government—society itself—is incapable of doing anything right, and this certainly applies to the executions of convicted criminals . . .. People can be executed in places like Shea Stadium before immense paying audiences. The income from the spectacle could be distributed to the prison that fed and housed him or to a trust fund for prisoner rehabilitation and his own family and/or girlfriend, as he himself chose. (Miller, *Echoes* 237)

As the above written quote from the article suggests, Miller satirically proposes that death penalties in America should be arranged as public spectacles with viewers being charged for live entertainment. Susan Abbotson draws attention to the fact that when Miller was working on *Resurrection Blues*, the US television was abuzz with the controversy related to the execution of America's domestic terrorist, Timothy McVeigh (*Critical* 291), the man responsible for the brutal Oklahoma bombings of 2001, prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Finally, the US court refused the much talked about public execution of the criminal responsible for the death of 168 people and injuries of over 600.

Resurrection Blues is set in "*various locations in a far away country*" (*CP* 438); it certainly seems to be a central American nation— "with extremes of poverty and wealth" (Bigsby, *Critical* 425). Thus, by keeping the details vague, Arthur Miller manages to maintain an air of mystery about this place. A deeply troubled nation, having endured almost four decades of civil war, corruption, and starvation, Jeanine's country is nothing short of a spiritual wasteland: fathers here push their eight-year-old daughters into prostitution, small children kill old men for shoes, and small babies lie dead and abandoned in gutters, without much attention paid by the city people.

The poor farmworkers of the country live in the mountains and suffer blood fluke, a disease caused by a water-born insect that turns the hair of children orange and damages their livers (*CP* 444). From Jeanine's prologue, it is clear that the country is under a dictatorial form of government where "a bullet waits for anyone who seriously complains" (440). She laments over the fact that her country has "eight feet of topsoil" and "plenty of rain", a resource that can ensure food for everyone, and still people here die of starvation; all that grows in her land is "greed" (440). The water is polluted, the air is polluted, people are polluted—life in this beautiful country is polluted.

The country also has a severe lack of competent medical facilities even for the rich: people such as Jeanine's father, Henri Schultz, travel abroad to study, to get medical treatment, and to experiment with various faiths, religions, and philosophical ideas. Sometimes, Buddhism is fun and at other times, Kant is cool: the search for the real/ultimate faith seems to be a pastime of the rich and powerful of this land while many children starve to death in the background.

This anonymous country also suffers rampant economic inequality: Schultz, the scion of a rich business family, represents the wealthy populace of the country (only 2 percent) that owns almost 96 percent of the total land of the nation (448). While the poor die of starvation and diseases, the rich of Jeanine's country travel all over the world to satisfy their curiosity, and once they are done, they come back to their "roots" and worry about the condition of the poor, and lament over the lost revolution.

Through his description of this unnamed "far away" place, Miller puts forward a question to the audience, "is America any better than this banana republic?". With its high crime rate, drug addiction, economic disparity, and escalating clinical depression, America stands as uncivilised as this backward land of the play. Both the government of Jeanine's country and America are unfair to a large section of their masses. The unnamed patient of *The Last Yankee* is nothing but a mute testimony to the general injustice of the nation, of

the helpless state of its people, and of the emotional paralysis of a whole culture that thrives on consumerism and greed. But Bigsby believes *Resurrection Blues* is not only about America or this anonymous central American dictatorship but about human civilization in general, as it speaks of human suffering at large (*Critical* 433-434).

The play's various characters embody and reflect moral, social, and emotional malaise and paralysis; Miller's criticism spares none. Felix Barriaux, the military dictator, is the quintessence of the corrupting influence of power and money— immorality personified. Once a radical, Felix is a very practical man today, with no time and energy spare for philosophical ideas. His fundamentals about ruling a country are clear: "f*** them before they can f*** you" (*CP* 442), as Felix says to his cousin, Henri, who comes to his office to convince him against Ralph's crucifixion. But the dictator feels he must get the villagers' messiah executed publically in order to put forward a live threat to the people: 'follow me or you shall die', thus reminding the audience of other infamous dictators such as Adolf Hitler and Saddam Hussain.

However, Henri is here for another purpose as well: to remind Felix of his duties towards the poor of his country, who according to Henri are in massive trouble. Felix's comments reflect his insensitive attitude as a leader:

> FELIX: No, Henri, it's your common sense telling you that in ten years the land you gave away will end up back in the hands of two percent of the smartest people! You can't teach a baboon to play Chopin. —Or are you telling me this idiot is the son of god? (448)

Henri finds Felix's attitude towards the poor quite outrageous and he tries to take him back to the old days when both of them empathised with the sufferings of the poor; yet, despite his efforts, Henri fails to reignite his cousin's lost idealism. Completely immersed in insensitivity and self-centeredness, Felix believes that the villagers are themselves responsible for their problems such as blood fluke:

> HENRI: . . . Felix, blood fluke in the water supply in the twenty-first century is . . . My god, you are the head of this country, don't you feel a . . .?
> FELIX: They won't boil the water, what can I do about it! . . . The British are definitely going to build a gigantic warehouse on the harbor, for god's sake!
> HENRI (*distressed*): A warehouse! What's that got to do with . . .
> FELIX: Because this country's starting to move and you're still talking blood fluke! . . . (445)

Felix already has a list of things that he would do with money he will receive through Ralph's crucifixion: new "shoes" and "poncho" for every policeman, new flush toilets, and of course, he feels this money can certainly facilitate them to have their "own airline" on which they can transport their "prostitutes" to get treated by a good "dentist" (450). For Felix, "dignity" lies in "modernization" (452). He believes that Ralph must agree to be crucified for the good of his people; because after all, "that's a hell of a lot better than dying for nothing!" (452).

> FELIX: . . . People are shot on television every ten minutes; bang-bang, and they go down like dolls, it's meaningless. But nail up a couple of these bastards, and believe me this will be the quietest country on the continent and ready for development! A crucifixion always quiets things down . . . (448)

Ironically, the man who threatens to kill others, sleeps at "different places every night" for the fear of being killed by the enemies (442). Abbotson calls Felix the South American version of Lyman Felt, the self-centred bigamist of *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*, who simply fails to see the brutality of his actions (*Critical* 296). Both Lyman Felt and Felix Barriaux are no longer the idealistic young men that they once used to be—power corrupts.

Felix suffers from erectile dysfunction, symbolic of his "inefficacy" as the head of this nation (297). Among the selected plays, Felix is Miller's second male character, after Phillip Gellburg, who is shown to be suffering sexual inability but unlike Gellburg, Felix talks openly about it and is desperate to find a cure. He becomes genuinely interested in Ralph when Stanley, one of Ralph's "*stoned*" apostles, tells him that Ralph "lights up" quite literally and induces orgasms in other people (*CP* 471); Jeanine, he says, seems to be benefitting through him. Félix thus starts to see a solution to his impotence in Ralph.

Henri Schultz, on the other hand, himself a lapsed revolutionary, advises against Ralph's crucifixion as he is certain that with a globally televised event like this one, the advertisers will make maximum money through medical products such as those manufactured by his own company. The irony of the situation also lies in the fact that Henri, being a very rich landowner and industrialist, wants to do something to help the poor; being part of that section of the population owning 96 percent of the country's wealth does not and cannot help the country's poor. Henri's character thus shows the audience how intellectual pursuits can (sometimes) make one even more indecisive about the right course of action. Abbotson finds Henri to be "ambivalent" to Ralph's situation: he is certainly drawn to Ralph's enigma and his "ability to transcend violence", but at the same time, he also feels that by being crucified Ralph can "save them all from having to face reality"

(*Critical* 298). Jeanine perhaps judges her father right when she describes him as "a drifting ship heading for where nobody knows"; she feels her "papa" is very much like her country, completely directionless (*CP* 440).

Resurrection Blues is also a sharp commentary on how the idealistic youth of such chaotic countries, in their impressionable age, get adversely affected by corruption and political fallacies surrounding them. And knowing of no way to help the situation, becoming a guerrilla fighter or a drug addict seem to be the only options for the emotionally paralysed youths of an equally paralysed society. When the nation is in a state of complete disarray, young people such as Jeanine and Stanley drug themselves heavily to ignore the pain and helplessness that constantly surround them; many take up arms or commit suicide— to show their rage against their dictatorial political system. Small revolutions of these kind of rebels are crushed by dictators, again using killing as a means. We must pay attention to the decade of the 1990s, to the American environment that preceded the production of this 2002 play by Miller. Franklin E. Zimring in his book, *American Youth Violence*, states that "adolescent violence has been throughout the 1990s a special focus of concern in American society and government" (xi).

> In the first seven years of the 1990s, virtually every state in the United States has changed the laws designed to cope with violence by offenders under 18, and the U.S. Congress and executive branch have been debating far-reaching proposals about juvenile and criminal justice to respond to levels of youth violence that are regarded as a national emergency. (xi)

Miller's concerns expressed in this play thus hold a valid background against which he wrote it. The play also shows us how when it comes to minting money out of an ugly, violent spectacle, the American media industry is always at prompt service: a TV crew has reached the breathtakingly striking location where Ralph's crucifixion is supposed to take place. This American film company has exclusive global rights for this spectacle. Members of the crew such as Sarah, the soundwoman and Emily Shapiro, the director, and Phil, the cameraman, are not even remotely aware of what they are going to shoot, highlighting the lack of seriousness of film and TV professionals while choosing assignments.

When the soldiers of the state start building the crucifix for Ralph, Emily is horrified. She refuses to pitch in; she is bribed, flattered, and eventually threatened by Skip L. Cheeseboro, an account executive for the film company. The poor morality and lack of seriousness of the crew members are also reflected in their general behaviour in the midst of this crisis. Emily, even though apparently quite upset at this idea, phone calls her mother

to remind her about feeding her cats. When her mother gets to know about the impending execution shoot, she says it is fine to go ahead with it if the man being executed is not "Jewish". Although not in favour of Ralph's crucifixion, Emily cannot walk out of this shoot because she needs money: she is expecting and she also has a house payment due.

Sarah makes a phone call to know the results of her pregnancy tests in the midst of these discussions, and is happy to know she is expecting. Phil, the cameraman, who is initially surprised to know about the crucifixion, eventually gets easy about working on the spectacle. Both Sarah and Phil, even though minor characters with few lines, give us a clear idea of the kind of modern world we inhabit. Post their momentary moral crisis, these crew members assume "professionalism" by agreeing to do their jobs for the filming of this crucifixion; and eventually, the news of its cancellation is able to cheer the two up. The inclusion of these minor characters in the play points towards the passive behaviour of the common masses who choose to be submissive to the everyday violence of this world, which is exactly the "paralysis" Miller underlines in *Broken Glass* also.

Skip Cheeseboro, the captain of this film unit, feels that by filming Ralph's crucifixion, he is not being immoral; because according to Skip, filming the spectacle and doing the killing oneself, are two separate things. He is relieved to know that his company has exclusive rights to shoot this film as Felix would get any intruder killed. When Henri, in his uniquely philosophical fashion tries to talk him out the deal with Felix, Skip reacts: "I am not "creating" anything! I am no more responsible for this situation than Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were for Jesus' torture!" (*CP* 480). Worldwide problems such as rape, murder, robbery, corruption, etc., flourish unchecked because of this attitude. As a representative of the first world, Skip certainly looks down upon the people of this unnamed country, assuming himself and his countrymen to be relatively more "cultured"; Miller wishes to point out the lack of difference between the two countries as he sees both suffering in the clutches of modern degeneration and immorality.

After their initial shock, the film unit is then seen quickly running their heads to make this crucifixion as authentic and theatrical as possible:

> SKIP: . . . In all the thousands of paintings and the written accounts of the crucifixion scene I defy anyone to produce a single one that shows a doctor present! I'm sorry but we can't be twisting the historical record! . . .. I will not superimpose American mores on a dignified foreign people. The custom here is to crucify criminals, period! I am not about to condescend to these people with a foreign colonialist mentality! . . .
> EMILY: And what do you plan on giving him? . . .

> SKIP: If you're talking light drugs, okay, but we can't have him staggering up to the cross or something. Especially in like dry states . . . (462)

As the play progresses, Ralph, the proclaimed "son of god", comes across as largely misinterpreted by both his followers and opponents. Even Jeanine, though deeply in love and awe of Ralph, believes his real identity to be uncertain. Miller thus plays an intelligent trick by not bringing Ralph as a person on stage but only as a white light— Ralph remains a mysterious presence in *Resurrection Blues* just like Kitty is in *Finishing the Picture*. Like Kitty, even Ralph is not really seen by the audience but others in the play claim to have seen him, to have spoken to him. And again, corresponding Kitty's condition, even Ralph is nothing but a screen or mirror on which the real character of the other characters of the play is reflected. They address Ralph and Kitty, sweet talk with them—only for vested interests, completely lacking genuine concern.

However, some details of Ralph's personality are divulged by the captured Stanley when he is interrogated by Felix: Ralph frequently changes names as he is afraid of being established as "some kind of celebrity guru" among people (471). To some, he is Ralph and to others, Charley, and a lot of different names to different people. He is also known to possess supernatural powers: he walks through walls, which is how he manages to escape prison. Stanley claims that Ralph "has terrific mind control, he can see space" (472). Everyone, including Jeanine's father, believe that Ralph has repaired her broken spine too. Yet, despite Ralph's "superpowers", even he suffers indecisiveness regarding his crucifixion—he is not sure if this execution will actually help the poor and deprived of his country. Therefore, he finds it best to disappear. This indecisiveness on Ralph's part emphasises the fact that even the most pious and benevolent of spirits can be corrupted and numbed in the modern degenerate environment.

He visits Felix as a "blinding white light" when he is about to hurt Stanley:

> FELIX: . . . Why did he come back? What's this all about, Stanley?
> STANLEY (*scared, elevated*): God knows!
> FELIX (*grabs* STANLEY*, shakes him*): Answer me! Answer me!
> STANLEY (*almost lifted off the floor by the throat*): —I think he just can't make up his mind, that's all—whether he really wants to—like die. I mean it's understandable, right? — . . . (474-75)

Abbotson believes that Ralph may actually be nothing but a "figment of their collective imagination" (*Critical* 298), or he may be a spiritual guru or a real messiah or just some light. Miller finds it better to leave this to the audience's imagination. The play ends in an anti-climax when there is no crucifixion at its end, perhaps hinting at the fact that probably

the modern world is not yet ready for a second coming, for a redemption. Felix and Skip struggle a lot to catch hold of the "light" but attain nothing in the end:

> FELIX: . . . I'm talking new hotels, I'm talking new construction . . .. You care about people? Come down and get crucified!
> JEANINE (*starting to weep*): For all our sakes, my darling, don't come down . . .!
> SKIP AND FELIX (*upward*): You can't do this to us! (*They look about, wait . . . then . . .*)
> SKIP (*to Felix*): You will return that check, or I'm calling the Embassy!
> FELIX: F**k the Embassy, I'm keeping the money . . .! (*CP* 498)

In the final scene of the play, all characters stand together, staring up into the bright light that they address as Ralph/Charley. Together they bid him a farewell and the light fades as they say good-bye, *"immensely relieved and sorry*" (499). Skip is most agitated at this loss of profit; he angrily stomps out. According to Mason, if Ralph is indeed the "messiah", then by letting him go away so easily, these people are letting go of their chance for "salvation" and if his "messianic status" is only "metaphorical", they are technically rejecting the possibility of "activism" (143).

Nonetheless, Miller's message to the audience is simple and clear, indeed very much in sync with Ralph's own advice to the villagers who worship him:

> STANLEY: If he gets known as a magician he thinks it could take away from his main message.
> FELIX: Which is what, in a few words?
> STANLEY: Well, you know . . . just don't do bad things. Especially when you know they're bad. Which you mostly do. (*CP* 472)

Emotional dislocation is the story of all of Miller's plays of the later decades. According to Otten, in almost all of his later plays, with *Broken Glass* being an exception, Miller avoids the "finality of tragedy" (228); yet the emotional deadness portrayed is equally tragic. Another human tragedy which beautifully essays America's moral paralysis in the Reagan years (1981-89) is *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan,* produced in 1991. The playwright describes it as his "completely political play" (Watts 59) as it essays the various challenges of living in an "amoral, chaotic postmodern society" (Abbotson, *Critical* 303), precisely depicting the moral decay and paralysis rampant in that decade.

Lying in a hospital bed, wrapped in casts and bandages, Lyman Felt, the central character of the play, presents to the audience yet another very concrete image of immobility and sickness. But unlike Kitty, Jeanine, Sylvia, Patricia, and Karen, Lyman does

not qualify for a victim—not only a reflection of his society's moral paralysis, Lyman is "immorality" himself. Having skidded his swanky car on a slippery road driving down Mt. Morgan road on a stormy day, Lyman has had a near death experience, and his two wives, Theodora and Leah, who, until now, have remained unaware of each other's existence, have rushed to attend to him, teary eyed, unacquainted with the ruin of their respective marriages with Lyman Felt—the bigamist. His adult daughter, Bessie is also there to see him.

> LYMAN: . . . There's an enormous amount of bigamy in the United States now.
> TOM: Oh? But what's the point . . .?
> LYMAN: I've been wondering—how about bigamy insurance? Might call it the Desertion Protection Plan.
> TOM (*laughs*): It's a great name for a policy . . .but you're kidding.
> LYMAN: I mean this. We could set the premiums very low, like a few cents a week. Be great, especially for minority women. (*CP* 217)

Neither clinically depressed as Patricia, Karen, and Kitty, nor confined to the wheelchair as Sylvia and Jeanine, Lyman Felt is a victim nonetheless: he is a victim of his own corrupt nature and greed, and of his constant, unwarranted yearning for "more". The police investigating his accident report that Lyman had himself removed the barrier which was put there to stop the vehicles from skidding down the slippery pathway. This fact forces his first wife, Theo, to wonder if Lyman was contemplating suicide at that point (237). But when confronted about the same by his lawyer-friend, Tom Wilson, Lyman declares: "that was not suicide—! am not a cop-out!" (274).

> LYMAN: I am happy, yes! That I'm married to Theodora and have Bessie . . . yes, and *Leah, too*! . . . And that I've made a mountain of money . . . yes, and have no pending lawsuits! . . . And that I don't sacrifice one day to things I don't believe in—and that includes monogamy, yes! —We love our lives, you goddam lion! —you and me both! (255-56)

An adulterer without guilt, Lyman wants to be free and powerful like a lion in the jungle. A flashback scene where one encounters Lyman's impractical act of facing a charging lion on a holiday to Africa with Theo and Bessie, gives the audience a small glimpse into his animalistic nature and his brazenness. He does not face the lion to prove anything to the beast but to feel his own insuperability—Lyman wants to assert that the rules of his society will not be able to subdue his wants and desires. A "good upright man" in one frame of his life where he helps the poor and needy through his business, Lyman is a virulent snake in the other, turning in on his business partner, and cheating his two wives and children. As

Gottfried puts it, even a lion is terrified of this kind of amalgamation of "testosterone and brains" that he sees in Lyman Felt (430).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, right from his early playwriting career, Arthur Miller's plays have shown strong influences of Greek drama and Henrik Ibsen's plays; he has also firmly believed in the idea of the "polis", asserting a strong connection between the individual and his society (Bigsby, *Modern* 79). There are other people and there is a society that we are all responsible to, is the common echo in all of Miller's plays. *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* depicts the very denial of this social responsibility by the individual: Lyman Felt believes that a man can either "be faithful to himself or to other people—but not to both" (*CP* 245). He feels that by being married to two women, he has only serviced his heart's desire; in fact, "in some miserable dark corner" of his "soul", he says he still does not understand why he is being "condemned" for his choices (276). According to Porter, this "miserable dark corner" of Lyman's soul belongs to Lucifer, the dark force of the universe (105).

The entire action of the play takes place in Clear Haven Memorial Hospital. Even though bed-ridden, Lyman tries hard to escape the inevitable confrontation between his two wives by simply jumping out of the window, but cannot because the hospital ward is funnily on the ground floor itself (*CP* 235). When the play begins, Lyman is delusional; he addresses a business conference in his sleep, amusing Nurse Logan, the only hospital staff seen on stage. Nightmares related to his dead father wake him up; Lyman's dreams, fancies, and hallucinations played out on stage, give the audience an understanding of his ingrained fears and insecurities.

The audience sees that this man of fifty something who is "*ordinarily so fit it is hard to tell* "his age (205), has managed to live two parallel, yet totally separate lives, with two different women of his choice, quite happily, for the last nine years. In one, he has a conventional existence of an insurance executive in New York, where he is married to Theodora, "*an idealistic, intellectually forceful*", Episcopalian woman of almost sixty years of age (208). Theodora believes in marriage, monogamy, and social order, and has a conservative approach to life. In his parallel life, he is married to Leah, a much younger, attractive and sharp Jewish businesswoman, with whom he lives in Elmira. Lyman is a contrastingly different man with both these women.

As the play moves further, the audience is enlightened on the history of Lyman's marriages with Theodora and Leah. He had an affair and started living in with Leah when he was already married to Theo. After Leah conceived his child, he lied to her that he would

divorce Theo, thus duping the pregnant Leah into a marriage with himself. After almost nine years of this duplicity, even now, when his lies are out in public, Lyman is shameless enough to tell his two wives that he loves them and wants them both. In the playwright's own words, Lyman Felt is a "Faustian character" of the modern times, with an insatiable appetite for luxury and women—capable of both "enormous construction and destruction" (qtd in Bigsby, *Critical* 367), a man who can manage to be both deceiving and authentic at the same time, confusing people around him, making it a challenge to correctly judge him.

Lyman loves hunting as a sport in Elmira while his New York wife, Theo, cannot even imagine her husband hunting (*CP* 235). His long-time friend, Tom, cannot believe that Lyman can fly planes while his second wife (according to law, only a mistress), says that "he is wonderful in air" (215). With Leah, Lyman enjoys a fun and risky existence where he owns and races luxurious cars, runs a business, races horses, and flies planes while with Theo, he lives like a regular working husband who avoids risks and is phobic of speed.

The people from Lyman's two lives are shocked at his split existence, unable to comprehend his moral lowness. Both for the other characters in the play and for Miller's audience, it becomes rather challenging to understand the many contradictions Felt exhibits in his personality. In fact, despite his immorality, Miller chooses to portray Lyman in a rather comical fashion; as stated previously, he can very well be likened to Felix Barriaux, the despot of *Resurrection Blues*, who worries over his sexual inadequacies in the midst of his country's crisis. In their youth, both Felt and Barriaux were "idealists", determined to change the world but now, the two have become great believers in gratification of the "self". Felt takes pride in having raised "over sixty ghetto blacks to office positions when it was not easy to do" (219); the man wants people to concentrate on his "benevolence" and not on his malice.

In the selected plays, Miller offers three different philandering men to the audience: Lyman, Hyman, and Felix, yet, none as lowly as Lyman Felt. If only the hospital had not informed both his wives of this accident, Lyman could have gone on living with his dual identity for much longer and probably even have died with it— leaving a mess behind for wives and children to deal with property and identity disputes.

The finesse with which Felt has managed to keep an entirely different personality in these two lives hints at an unfathomable psychological and moral disorder. Despite having deeply hurt the feeling of his two wives and children, Lyman fails to understand why he cannot keep both his wives and stay happy. According to him, if his personal conscience allows it, he need not bother about a social conscience. Most Miller scholars

such as Bigsby and Abbotson, feel that Lyman Felt is nothing but a progression of Willy Loman, the central male character of Miller's *Death of a Salesman*—Lyman is only Loman turned rich. *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* certainly has strong echoes of *Salesman* as Felt is everything Loman aspired to be, but could not. The play replicates Loman's story in both its "dramatic situation" and its "form" (Otten 211). Exactly like Loman, Felt deceives his family, "contemplates suicide", suffers guilt, and still makes a plea for "innocence" (211).

To truly understand Miller's intentions behind writing this play, one needs to perceive Felt as a direct portrayal of America's ingrained narcissism and lust at its peak, during the 1980s—the Reagan era. Through Lyman's story, the playwright points at the fact that it is the American tendency to "have it all", anyhow, that breeds people such as Felt, who believe that society's rules can be rubbished if they are in a position of power. Thus by presenting Lyman as the quintessence of human chaos, the play cautions the audience against excesses of all sorts.

Miller referred to Lyman Felt as the "quintessential eighties man" (Lewis, "Mellow Miller" 6) as his story unmistakeably reflects the moral condition of the age, with him personifying the "ethos of the Reagan era" (Otten 212). Ronald Reagan, the most efficacious American politician of the late twentieth century, merchandised the American dream of "heroic individualism" to reinforce the country's economy and establish America as a "benevolent" power in the world (Sengupta 14). Yet, despite his glorious plans for America, Reagan nosedived miserably because of his erroneous morals, as happens with Lyman in the play. Reagan suffered defeat for not being able to scrutinize his own "values in any greater depth than Lyman" does in the play (14). America was left behind with "record budget deficits and a bruised self-image to the international community" (14) as legacies of the Reagan times—the "me" cohort (15).

To pinpoint the oblique hints of Reaganism in Miller's play, Abbotson draws attention to the fact that Lyman and Leah get married in the same year when Ronald Reagan is chosen to power in America (*Critical* 303), which ironically signals the beginning of a moral deterioration, when the country fell prey to a system of decadent wish-fulfilment.

According to Bigsby, since Miller wrote this play both in the '70s and '80s, it bears strong imprints of both Nixon and Reagan years (*Modern* 116), depicting "general greed" that is closely knitted in America's basic social structure (Scanlan 184). As in all his other plays, Miller's criticism spares none: in Lyman's two wives, the dramatist presents a replication of the American masses, who choose their president for all the wrong reasons, inevitably regretting their decisions in the longer run. Perhaps Shockley puts it most

perfectly: the love for President Reagan during his tenure of two terms says more about the people of America than about the president himself (85). Thus, by marrying Lyman, Theo and Leah clearly choose corruption for themselves. Despite various hints and suspicions, they continue living with him. Ronald Reagan was elected president twice—Lyman Felt has been loved and married by two women.

Leah admits to Tom, "I think I sensed something about him wasn't on the level but . . . I guess I must have loved him so much . . ." (*CP* 224). This younger woman in Lyman's life is definitely not as morally upright as she would like to believe. She was living with Lyman as his mistress, completely aware of his marriage and daughter with Theo. She, in a way, encouraged Lyman to go and ask his long-time wife for a divorce:

> LYMAN: I can't lie to myself, darling, she's been a tremendous wife. It would be too unjust.
> LEAH**:** But keeping it secret—where does that leave me? It's hard enough to identify myself as it is. And I can't believe she won't find out sooner or later, and then what?
> LYMAN: If I actually have to choose it'll be you. But she doesn't know a soul in this whole area, it'd be a million to—one shot for her ever to find out. I'm practically with you half the time now, and it's been pretty good, hasn't it?
> LEAH**,** *touching her belly*: . . . But what do we tell this . . .?
> LYMAN: . . . Benjamin. (221)

Likewise, Theo also accepts her role in the tragedy of her marriage with Lyman: she admits that she always knew Lyman was lying to her and was unfaithful, but she still chose to stay married to him. While Leah deals with her marital failure more practically, worrying more about her shared insurance business with Lyman and also about her son's share in Lyman's wealth, Theodora miserably breaks down—which may be attributed to her extremely conservative upbringing and living, at least in a direct comparison with Leah. Yet, Theo's emotional breakdown frees her of her life-long pretence. In *Broken Glass*, Sylvia Gellburg speaks out for herself and for the Jews, only when her legs become paralysed. Similarly, Theodora collapses with shock only when everything is right there in front of everyone to see; she now confesses her mistakes and accepts her own role in the Felt family fiasco. She confesses to Tom that since Lyman was always rich and well-respected, she chose to stay with him despite her unhappiness in their marriage.

Lawyer-friend, Tom Wilson, as a neutral character in the play, is shocked at his friend's personal debacle like everyone else. Evidently, Tom stands in stark contrast to Lyman because he plays a loyal, monogamous husband in the play. About Lyman's misadventure, Tom says to Leah: "I'm just stunned, I can't absorb it" (215), but as indicated

in the play, Tom seems to have known of Lyman's philandering before anyone else. And even though Tom has always had a soft corner for Theodora and has wanted Lyman to stay devotedly with her instead of philandering, it is a shame that he never really felt like hinting it to the woman:

> LYMAN: . . . But I just don't want to cheat anymore—it's gotten hateful to me, all deception has. It's become my Nazi, my worst horror! I want to wear my own face on my face every day till I die. Or do you think that kind of honesty is possible?
> TOM: I don't have to tell you; the problem is not honesty but how much you hurt others with it. (219)

According to Abbotson, Tom Wilson lives "vicariously" through Lyman (Abbotson, *Critical* 309) to realize the darker side of his fantasies through his "adventurous" friend. Lyman has also seen Wilson eye women at his office, but Tom seems to have suppressed his desires, which is probably how he manages to remain loyal in his marriage.

There are moments in the play when Lyman appears slightly regretful but it remains a challenge to know if his guilt is genuine. He appears to be sorry for his actions because at the moment, he wishes to escape this situation, anyhow. He shamelessly says to Theo, Leah, and Bessie: "I love you all . . . you are all magnificent!'" (*CP* 273). Having lived his life on the principle of immediate gratification, Lyman just wants an escape. "Let's delay all till we die" (228), he pleads, wanting desperately to escape the consequences of his immoral actions. Such moral paralysis of an individual causes both personal and familial collapse, leading to a larger social and national paralysis.

Bessie, Lyman's daughter, feels that her father "ought to be killed" (273), and Leah refuses to let him meet their nine-year-old son, Benjamin, any longer. No matter how much Lyman apologises now, Bessie would not listen to him at all. She tries to shame him by saying, "who wouldn't (despise him)?" (226). There is certainly no respite for Lyman's soul as his physical injuries and bones may heal in the hospital, but his efforts at "personality integration" may completely miscarry (Egerton, "Sick" 108).

In the end, both Leah and Theo leave him in Clear Haven Memorial Hospital, the same facility where Leah had once given birth to Benjamin. Theo's dictum for life, "everything ultimately fits together . . . and for the good" (*CP* 208), seems out of place in her married life with Lyman Felt while her husband's own maxim, "the first law of life is betrayal; why else did those rabbis pick Cain and Abel to open the Bible?" (245), is what we see occupying the lives of all characters of this play. It is only Nurse Logan, in whose company Lyman is finally left. "I love your warmth, Logan . . . you're a piece of the sun"

(277), the abandoned man says to his nurse, and as a sympathetic sign, Logan kisses his forehead. It is indeed a gesture which, even though, beyond the nurse's professional duties, gives some sort of solace to Lyman in his misery.

According to Arthur Miller, "it is always necessary to ask how old a writer is who is reporting his impressions of a social phenomenon" because "like the varying depth of a lens, the mind bends the light passing through it differently according to age" (*CE* 348). Some of his later plays reflect his concerns related to ageing, ageism, and memories—all combined together. His 1987 double bill, *Danger: Memory* provides us an exploration of "memory", illustrating through the two one-act plays how an acknowledgement of the past holds significance in our lives, but also how an overindulgence can prove fatal.

Prof. Karl Figlio, a psychoanalytic psychotherapist, in his research on "collective memory as a psychosocial enclave" states that "collective memory, like individual memory, is the backbone that holds identity together" (161). As can be observed, Miller's selected plays demonstrate how "identity" in numbing scenarios remains under question, under pressure, and under subjugation, making paralysis an inadvertent outcome. Both trauma concerning the memory of an individual and the memory of America as a nation have been emphasised upon in these plays.

I Can't Remember Anything (1987) and *Mr. Peters' Connections* (1998) explicitly depict this different side of human numbness— the one related to encountering the twin problems of old age and memories; while *Clara*, which is chiefly a detective story, addresses the concerns in an oblique manner. Numbed, helpless, and paralysed, the ageing characters of these plays appear to be in a state of constant struggle—with themselves, with their society, and with a world that seems to be changing just too fast for them. Coming from the canon of an ageing playwright, these plays are an apt yet poignant portrayal of his overall impressions as a person and writer growing old in America, the nation whose highs and lows he personally encountered, whose changes—both good and bad he lived through, and which he creatively dramatized in his writing. The year *Danger: Memory* was produced, that is, 1987, Miller also finally published his life's story, *Timebends: A Life*, which offers us a beautiful exploration of the playwright's own wrestling with memories.

Simone de Beauvoir once said that as we age, "the future shortens while our past grows heavier" (*Coming of Age* 361). The burden is indeed heavy on the two central characters, Leo and Leonora of *I Can't Remember Anything*. As a dramatic piece, this one-act play is a realistic "slice of life" (Griffin 159), bearing little action but ordinary conversation. Leonora, a regular visitor to her friend, Leo's New England home, keeps

saying that she cannot remember anything while Leo, on the other hand, only a couple of years younger to herself, makes a conscientious effort to retain old memories, of which Leonora and her dead husband, Frederick, are a vital part. To the audience, it gives one the feeling of eavesdropping on two ageing friends[xi], who have known each other for decades altogether. With all their friends dead and family mostly distanced or dead too, these two now have each other, only. The play's entire action is confined to Leo's living-room kitchen where the two sit down and recollect various details of their old lives—a game in which Leonora does not seem much participative, leading to arguments and disputes. They bicker a lot at each other: Leonora gets annoyed at Leo's optimism, and he at her lack of it.

Leonora is an embodiment of emptiness and purposelessness; practicing "amnesia" through alcohol (Bigsby, *Cambridge* 163*)*, she tries to cut herself off—from the past, from the present, and also from any possibility of future.

> LEONORA: I used to believe, as a girl . . . that everything has its purpose . . .. But what purpose have I got? I am totally useless, to myself, my children, my grandchildren, and the one or two people I suppose I can call my friends who aren't dead. (*CP* 6)

The fact that her feeling of purposelessness is relatable to the one experienced by a much younger Jeanine or Patricia of other selected plays, is a matter of much concern. They may be characters aged differently, living and experiencing varying time and space but their disappointment with life is analogous: the modern times indeed bestow upon numerous men and women existential crisis—despair and meaninglessness, which evidently reach their peak in old age.

Leonora tries every day to cut herself off from life; she complains that she cannot even taste anything, anymore (3). But what's intriguing to the audience is that while the ageing woman can remember minute and insignificant everyday details such as the racoon that Leo had told her about or the dentist and plumber that he had suggested to her (12), her memory fails when Leo talks about the other more significant details of her past such as the ones related to her dead husband. It is therefore a challenge to exactly comprehend Leonora's pattern of retention and forgetfulness: she seems to be erasing all memories associated with negativities of her past life such as war and violence. Her amnesia thus appears to be more willed than natural. Even to Leo, her inability (or her reluctance) to recollect details of her marriage with Frederick remains a puzzle. Much like some "Beckettian figure" having "wandered into a Miller play" (Bigsby, *Critical* 361), Leonora finds everything "imaginary", including herself (*CP* 7).

Thus, the conversation between Leo and Leonora, mostly bordering on arguments, illustrates two different types of human brokenness— demonstrating how both an obsession with the past and a numbness to it can be fatal to human existence. Leo's fixation with the past can be viewed as a reflection of the emptiness that lies within him. He wants to make sure that his past is present all around— therefore, the "line drawings" of old dead friends in his living room and his close association with Leonora, in whose existence he preserves his "golden times"; even though, his connection with Leonora is mostly about the memories related to his mentor, Frederick.

Unlike Leo, Leonora's personal memory is as dislocated as her historical memory. When Leo quizzes her about the name of the French president during the first World War, she is unable to answer his question, even though she lived in France during the outbreak of the war (8). A life-long "communist", Leo appears more forceful and deliberate about things; he asks for a validation for life and looks for a reason to live. And even though he cannot concentrate on the bridge design his friend sent him to check, and feels his mental faculties failing with age, Leo would still not like to give up. Varied tasks such as playing crossword puzzles, drawing, doing calculations for buildings and bridges, and reading newspapers, keep him busy.

In understanding and analysing these characters, Frank Rich's *New York Times* review of the play seems completely apt: "disillusioned with a civilization still mired in brutality and lies", Leonora wishes to immerse herself in "reclusiveness" and alcohol, constantly questioning the "value of her own existence" while Leo, "an unregenerate Depression-spawned Communist", defies her crisis by rejecting to "relinquish entirely his hope for the world" ("The Stage").

According to de Beauvoir, the aged often see themselves as some accomplishments of the past. While the young around them are busy pursuing newer things and achieving greater heights, the old are sometimes left with no better options but to stick to recollecting details of their past. Because the elderly see for themselves a much smaller future, they often take "refuge in habit", and when the depression of ageing finally strikes them, they sometimes make a concerted effort to give meaning to their existence by practicing "devotion to individuals, to groups, or causes, social, political, intellectual, or creative work" (*Coming of Age* 540). Elaine Showalter also believes that the elderly "are both outside of time and running out of time", and therefore, they prefer pursuing "meaning" through "anger, activism, attachment, and art" (*Out of Time-Intro* xvi).

This is exactly what Leo can be seen attempting in this play. His idea of donating his organs to a hospital, the very thought of his life being of some use to the world, gives him some meaning. Yet, the audience manages to see a lack of it in the elderly man's life. In fact, even Leonora can be seen making an attempt to pitch in by desperately looking for charities to donate all her wealth to. However, for Leonora, the donations of her wealth have little to do with finding purpose but relinquishing altogether everything she has ever owned.

Her numbness and her reluctance to connect or belong is apparent in the way she refuses to even listen to any outside news now; she is completely reluctant to fit into the modern fast-paced world. "Why can't you just admit that it's all nothing? . . . our lives, the whole damn thing", she asks Leo (*CP* 16). She is disheartened looking at the current state of the world, so much so that she assumes that the money she donates to assuage hunger in Africa is being thieved. "How terrible it is," she cries, "in the old days I never once thought of someone stealing money we donated to . . . the Spanish Republicans, for instance" (13). Her distrust with the modern world and people forces the audience to wonder why Leo cannot accept that for her to remember anything is indeed painful. He keeps pushing the mundane on her, unable to comprehend that having lived for over seven decades, she has come to realise that everything indeed is meaningless.

> LEO: I don't know, it's just a damn shame to forget all that. Your lamb always had absolutely clear pink juice, like rosé wine . . . Those were some great dinners.
> LEONORA: Were they?
> LEO: Yes.
> LEONORA: Well, I'm glad you enjoyed them. To me—when I do think of anything like that—it's like some page in a book I once read . . .
> LEO: But it's not a book, it's your life, kiddo.
> LEONORA: Yes, well . . . so what? Look at these millions of people starving to death all over the place, does anyone remember them? Why should I remember myself any more than I remember them? (9-10)

Thus, "part real and part willed" (Bigsby, *Critical* 361), Leonora's blankness is painful. In fact, according to Miller, she uses "her absence of memory as a defiance" (*Conversations-Gussow* 164) against the brutal environment in which she finds herself entrapped. A dead husband and a separated son on a self-exploration journey, travelling around with his band of musicians—all of Leonora's close relations have lost meaning to her. Her consumption of her "colored water" (*CP* 3) is just her way to escape agonizing memories of the past. Given the social and national decline that surrounds them, Leonora finds her friend's optimism forged and groundless. Like Sylvia Gellburg, Leonora feels paralysed—

completely helpless in the face of social and national decline while Leo, like the other characters of *Broken Glass,* chooses to overlook the apparent decline and devastation; perhaps because this is how he feels he can go on living.

Shaun Clarkson points out how Leonora finds in nature "the wholeness, a sense of completion to the world", which she fails to see in humanity (3). Her connection to nature reminds the audience of Leroy Hamilton and Karen Frick of *The Last Yankee,* the characters who believe in growing their own vegetables and living peacefully. Like the Fricks of the other play, Leonora and her husband also had a very rich and comfortable life but the old woman still would not like to remember or talk about her marriage or her past. She finds it easier to talk about the deer she saw or the trees she found beautiful; her connection with nature is indicative of the vitality she still has:

> LEONORA: . . . I never think of anything. I just drive around the countryside and look at the trees, I don't see what's wrong with that. I love the trees; they are strong and proud and they live a long time, and I love them very much. (*She is filling up, takes a breath to suppress her feeling.*) Everything is so awful, Leo; really and truly this is not the same country. (*CP* 13)

She lives in a strong sense of disagreement with the way things are moving in the world around her; she knows it is moving even faster towards insensitivity and brutality. "Why don't they leave those poor animals alone?" (14), she says complainingly to Leo and often directs her frustration at the newspapers that her friend keeps reading. In her rant, "but nothing is 'happening!' Excepting that it keeps getting worse and more brutal and more vile", there is an echo of what Bessie says to her mother in *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*: "things don't always get done in this country" (209).

Simone de Beauvoir points out that just like women, the aged across the world suffer the agonies of discrimination— being "othered" and alienated. At the same time, de Beauvoir asserts that the elderly men find it more difficult to accept their ageing process when directly compared with their ageing female counterparts. The elderly man "becomes, and to a far more radical extent than a woman, a mere object" because while a woman is predominantly "necessary" to others in the society, the man is chiefly more purposeless, thus completely losing his sense of "worth" (*Coming of Age* 89). Leo is certainly a man trying hard to deal with ageing.

Staying abreast with what's happening around him, Leo exhibits a more scientific and practical approach to things. According to Centola, Leo is not afraid of accepting his past (*Achievement* 137) while Abbotson, on the other hand, believes that Leo suffers from

a "whitewashed memory" ("Dangers"126). She feels that in his "refusal to accept the real past and his preference for a fake past", Leo ends up hurting both himself and his companion (126). Even though he almost worshipped Leonora's husband, his memories of Frederick do not seem too clear. Leo offers odd details of Frederick's "glorious" past, revering him as some kind of a "hero". Frederick once tied a big salami in between his legs and waved it at the women (*CP* 7), and at another point, he went to Leonora's mother and said, "your daughter has the finest backside I have ever seen" (16). Both these instances point towards Frederick's insincerity and vulgarity, and nothing else in particular. With a closer reading of the text, it becomes obvious that Leo's coldness towards Leonora is chiefly because she refuses to hold on to the past, and especially, to his version of the past. Like Phillip Gellburg, Leo has a habit of keeping his own version of reality, without caring about the numbness being experienced by his companion.

Leo is certainly not as optimistic as he seems to be: the images that surround him reflect his obsession with mortality. He envies Leonora's vitality and fitness, and struggles with his arthritis every day. Despite all his attempts at retaining good health, Leonora's "life-force" is what he needs (Abbotson, *Critical* 194), but he always has morbid thoughts and things to say. He forces her to think who out of the two would die first, and tells her that he has already decided what he would like to be done with his corpse: he has decided to leave his "organs" to science and research:

> LEO: In case you're not dead and you walk in and there I am with my eyes crossed and my tongue hanging out.
> LEONORA (*grimacing*): Oh stop that, for God's sake.
> LEO: Well that's how you look when you have a stroke. (*CP* 5)

Even though a self-confessed communist who lives in tattered clothes, Leo's memories of the past centre around the good 'dine and wine' he enjoyed when Frederick was still around. The man that Leo admires so much was a consumerist and a disloyal husband, who cracked vulgar jokes in the presence of other women, but still Leo wants Leonora to retain those painful memories. His opinion about people being nothing but "talking nitrogen" (17), reflects his attempts at denying humanity altogether (Abbotson, "Dangers" 128).

As the play progresses, Leonora plays her estranged son, Lawrence's photograph record; she dances a samba with Leo, and eventually leaves for home. In the 1986 Grove edition of the play, after their dinner and dance, Leo gets back to work and Leonora goes home, later dialling to wish him good night. In the 1987 version of the same play (Dramatist

Play Service), which was published after the play had already received its production, the conversation between Leo-Leonora ends with a fight, both before and after their dance. In the latter version, Leo banishes Leonora, blaming her for his poor health, asking her not to come around every day. He rubbishes her by saying that he had kept friendly terms with her only for Frederick's sake, after which Leonora leaves annoyed. At the end, Leo feels happy for having put an end to their friendship, and when Leonora phones him after reaching home, he repeats the same uncouth remarks to her.

About *Danger: Memory*, Abbotson is of the view that both these short works "bemoan the dwindling of U.S. radicalism" (*Critical* 129), which is quite obvious given the anti-liberal American climate of the modern times. Frank Rich states that the central character in each of these memory-plays suffers a sort of "symbolic amnesia" ("The Stage"). In *Clara*, the audience witnesses the emotional vacuum and helplessness of an ageing father, Albert Kroll, who lies semi-conscious on the floor of his murdered daughter's New York apartment, shocked at the news of her death. With Clara's decapitated body lying upstairs, her father is pushed hard to recollect the name of her alleged murderer, a Hispanic rehabilitating criminal, who was also her boyfriend. While Detective Lew Fine shoots questions at Kroll, the latter constantly blocks out the name of the murderer.

The relationship between Clara and her father is comparable to the bond shared by Jeanine and her father, Henri Schultz in *Resurrection Blues.* Both father-characters in these plays suffer guilt of having introduced their daughters to an idealism and righteousness that they had themselves long abandoned or perhaps never completely believed in. Jeanine's suicide attempt and Clara's murder reflect both a lack of parental responsibility and hypocrisy in the name of liberal values. Jeanine and Clara stake their lives for the sake of a revolution aimed at helping others. Clara apparently worked for prison reform where she befriended a man who had already murdered his previous girlfriend.

> CLARA: He has two things that are a lot like you, Daddy. He's soft and he's strong. And he's overcome so much that we can't even imagine . . .
> KROLL: I don't understand enough about the mind, darling. How a man can ever kill a woman.
> CLARA: But you've killed.
> KROLL: In a war. That's a different thing.
> CLARA: But you understand rage. You weren't firing from a distance or dropping bombs from a plane . . .
> KROLL: But they'd jumped us, Clara. I was fast asleep in the tent and suddenly they were all over me like roaches.
> CLARA: You felt that same uncontrollable rage, though . . .

KROLL: It's not the same . . . (*CP* 37-8)

Since Clara had learnt from her father the importance of placing trust in others, she thought she could actually reform a criminal. She got romantically involved with the man, with a feeling of service to mankind. The essential thing to note here is that Kroll, despite his awareness and stress regarding her relationship with the criminal, did not stop her. After all, it was at least better than his daughter being involved with another woman[xii], which according to him was more dangerous than being involved with a murderer.

Her boyfriend's Hispanic origin and his criminal background made Kroll averse to him and yet he chose not to confront his fears in front of Clara. Now Kroll accepts his shame for having pretended to be a "liberal", for having narrated to his young daughter stories of his own "heroism" during Second World War. Kroll commanded a company of blacks in the war and saved them from the attack of a lynch mob at Mississippi. His gallantry and humanitarian service inspired Clara who failed to see her father's biased common attitude, his life-lies.

But then, "the past explodes into the present" and it certainly has a numbing impact on Kroll (Bigsby, *Critical* 363). While the father is forced to answer Fine's pressing questions, Clara keeps appearing on stage, seen only by her father (*CP* 28, 32). Slides of her pictures appear on stage as photographers record the crime scene. Only Kroll sees and hears Clara and not the other characters—for she is his guilt. Commenting on Kroll's situation, Bigsby expresses that in this investigation, the father is not protecting the murderer's name but his own because he is aware of his participation in Clara's murder, even though in an oblique manner (*Critical* 362). He does so to hide the emptiness of his long held political idealism and beliefs that Clara inadvertently learnt from him (Rich "The Stage"). Each time his daughter took risks in the name of humanitarian service, Kroll felt his chest swell with pride.

Detective Lew Fine's trepidations in life or why his son committed suicide, even though hinted in the play, have not been elaborately discussed; yet, the collective emotional paralysis of both fathers is perceived by the audience. Lew Fine exposes himself as a "lapsed liberal" (Rich), as someone who has made peace with the fact that morals and ideals have no place in this cutthroat American environment. In the beginning itself, when Kroll gets up from his prostrate position, he points out to Fine that he looks exactly like his old friend, Bert, who once betrayed him. The exchange between Fine and Kroll mirrors their personalities and attitudes; Jon Tuttle believes detective Lew Fine to be Kroll's "alter ego",

his "devil's advocate", and also a projection of his subconscious (41). The audience is left with questions regarding the uncanny similitude of appearance and situation between Lew Fine and Bert, an old business partner of Kroll's.

In a perfectly Freudian fashion, Fine says to Kroll "we block things we're ashamed to remember" (*CP* 34), unaware of his own numbness and blocking mechanisms. Fine lost his toe to the war and his son to suicide, which are the exact things that Kroll claims happened with his friend, Bert. For his dead son, Fine laments saying, "I failed him" (43). Both fathers, Lew and Kroll, face the guilt of not being able to save their children from the attitudes they themselves inspired. An ideal liberal, an image Kroll had conjured up to be "well-liked" by his daughter, resulted in her death. He admits to Fine that at many points in his experience with the blacks, he wanted to give up the fight for them but he somehow managed to continue. Even now, Kroll is involved in housing work that segregates the minorities including the Blacks and the Hispanics. Not only this, Clara's father attends lewd parties with a corrupt man named Charlie Ruggieri (44).

> FINE: . . . You're tied up about this name—correct me—because you can't stop telling your lies. You're not protecting a name, are you; you'd like this man caught and killed, right? It's not him, it's your lies you can't let go of. It's ten, twenty, thirty years of shit you told your daughter, to the point where she sacrificed her life, for what? To uphold what you don't believe in yourself. (42)

While Kroll lives in complete denial of his own and the world's culpability, Fine keeps reminding him that the world is such—it is racist, biased, and brutal. In the end, Kroll is finally able to reveal the name of his daughter's murderer. According to Abbotson, *Clara* is certainly not a realistic piece of work as the name of the murderer could be easily obtained by making a phone call to Kroll's wife (*Critical* 98). Yet, Miller makes Kroll pull it out of his own memories; it is his "salvation" (98). In the final scene of the play, Kroll realises that even though practically difficult to live with, his ideal liberal values are the right course of action in the modern 'animal' world (99). He stands up erect in the end, and looks clearer about who he really is. Just like Phillip Gellburg from *Broken Glass,* Kroll accepts the reality of his life and the world around him only after a shock.

Mr. Peters' Connections is yet another demonstration of the dilemma of memory and ageing. The play's central character, Mr. Harry Peters is an old man experiencing an acute sense of purposelessness, completely lacking direction. Like Leonora of *I Can't Remember Anything*, Peters is too close to death, and numbed realizing the fact after all these years, he has not made any sense at all. "What is the subject?" (*CP* 401), the old

man's refrain in the play, mirrors his inability to justify his life. Leonora's feeling of being "imaginary" is thus aptly picturised in the character of Mr. Peters, who, though presented rather comically by a playwright himself in his early eighties, borders on darkness and disappointment.

The action of the play, Arthur Miller himself specified in a 1998 preface, "is the procession of Mr Peters' moods", each of them beckoning up the next (*Penguin*); all of his dispositions express his anxieties and fears. Like *I Can't Remember Anything*, this play also mourns the loss of youth, of dreams and ambitions, and of human "connections" that at one point seemed so important and so satisfying. Thus, as the story of an uprooted man who has lost his "connections", the play is indeed a "contemplation of life itself" and also a "confrontation with death" (Bigsby, *Critical* 406). In his 1998 performance review of the play published in *New York Times*, Ben Brantley calls this play "a numbing experience"; he also adds that Miller's play attempts to draw "parallels" between the life of a tired old man nearing the end of his life and the "spiritual weariness" of the fatigued nation he lives in ("Meaning"). Caught somewhere between sleep and wakefulness, Mr. Peters appears to be in a state of daydreaming. From Willy Loman to Lyman Felt, Miller has presented to us central male characters stuck in a constant state of reverie. Small fragments of Mr Peters' life played out on stage are comparable to a delusional Lyman's in *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* and give us a peep into his mind.

A former pilot for Pan American Airways, Mr. Peters seems to be approaching a "final landing" now (Bigsby, *Critical* 406). "If you planted an apple tree when I was born", he says, "you'd be cutting it down for firewood by now" (*CP* 403); Peters is completely aware of his decay. Like Leonora, Peters also feels so numbed that he fails to connect to both people and things around himself. One by one, Mr. Peters calls through his memory people who had meant something to him at one point of time, but now when they come before him, he only sees them as mere strangers. They mean nothing: life means nothing. Yet, the old man tries to decode the meaning of his existence through these people. "What is the subject?", he keeps asking, and finds no answer. In facing the imminent fact, that is, his death, Peters is required to ask himself what life has meant, what has been its "subject". This meaninglessness leaves him blank.

> PETERS: . . .. —Whereas now, I just cannot find the subject! Like I'll be strolling down the street, and suddenly I'm weeping, everything welling up. What is the subject? Know what I mean? Simply cannot grasp the subject. —I can't understand why I'm so fluent here! (406)

Youth gives one the illusion of his abilities to leave a mark on the world, but seeing characters such as Leonora and Peters takes one closer to reality—there indeed appears to be no "subject", no meaning, whatsoever. Everything comes down to nothingness in this world. Having conquered the skies in his youth, Mr. Peters must have felt himself to be above average human beings at one point of time, but now, he is as perishable as everyone else around him.

There is an environment of mystery and uncertainty right from the moment the play begins—the show is already over. The main action of the play is set entirely in a dilapidated nightclub, whose building has gone through some major changes in the past many years. At various points of time, the building was a bank, a library, and a liberal café destroyed during the Vietnam war; transience is the law of life. The career that once seemed to gift Mr. Peters' life a shape and meaning is also an old relic now; he feels as dilapidated as the night club. The building's story through being a bank, library, liberal café and nightclub, also stands for the development of the American nation: "capitalism" to "philanthropy" to "socialism" to "hedonistic self-concern" (Abbotson, *Critical* 249). It is evocative of Miller's own country that builds itself up only to shatter everything all over again (Bigsby, *Critical* 410).

Standing somewhere amid "life and death" (Abbotson, *Critical* 249), Mr. Peters has outlived all those he loved. The play is indeed a study of the lives of the aged (246), but unlike, *Danger: Memory,* which deals with the subject in an oblique manner, Mr. Peters' story touches the subject straight. The baseline remains: how do the old justify their longevity and what is to be done with memories, and what is the ultimate reality of existence?

> Old age was growing inside me. It kept catching my eye from the depths of the mirror. I was paralyzed sometimes as I saw it making its way toward me so steadily when nothing inside me was ready for it. (de Beauvoir, *Circumstance* 167)

America's ageing stats for year 2014 report "46 million people above age 65", collectively "accounting for 15 percent of the total population" of the country [xiii]. Discoursing on the subject of growing old and the vulnerability of the aged in America, Elinor Langer states that for American citizens, this last phase of their lives is perhaps the "worst"; with various developments of medical science, the diseases of youth have been controlled because of which more men and women today live longer but the old of America are usually "bored

and alienated" (471). There is no denying the fact that in most modern nations, social antipathy towards the elderly has only increased in the recent years.

In her book on ageing and ageism, *Out of Time,* Lynne Segal throws light on how important it is "to think again, to think more imaginatively, about ageing" in the contemporary world when people are living longer than ever before (2). Bereavement from old friends and relations can leave one feeling rather emptied in old age; demise of loved ones not only deprives the old of their "presence" but also of the part of themselves that they had so closely "entwined with theirs" (de Beauvoir, *Coming of Age*). In the absence of loved ones through death, the elderly naturally begin to see more clearly their own approaching departure from the world; the whole "idea of death" can certainly provoke a kind of "reflex towards life" among the elderly.

Peters misses the simplicity of the old times when he was a pilot and life was nothing but glorious. Through his central character, Miller highlights the frustration of . old people, who find it difficult to come to terms with the changing times and standards around them.

> PETERS: . . . Remember banana splits; four balls of ice cream on a sliced banana, covered with hand whipped cream, chocolate sauce and a maraschino cherry on top . . . for twenty-five cents? That, my friend, was a country, huh? I mean that was a country! —and whoever had a key to their front door. (*CP* 413)

Peters gets upset looking at the modern degeneration, at the narcissism of the modern world where "body worship" comes before homes and morals.

> PETERS: My father paid five thousand for the eight-room house our whole family lived in for thirty years! And a pair of tits is five thousand?
> CALVIN: Yes. But houses are not as important; put a house on one magazine cover and a pair of tits on another, which one'll sell? (414)

The nostalgia for the old world overwhelms Peters so much that he does not even realise that in his capacity of a pilot, he participated in a war against mankind and dropped bombs on human beings without feeling anything about his actions. This is probably a common tendency we observe in all three ageing characters of the selected plays: all of them live in undue reverence for the past, forgetting past negativities. There were wars, inhumanity, brutality in the world earlier as well; Leo, Leonora, and Peters were then young— and that's the whole difference. Abbotson believes that war demonstrates "a negative past of disconnection", in which Mr. Peters callously bombed fellow humans; it is only through

"walking the streets" that the old man will truly be able to "connect" to common people—the humanity at large (*Critical* 249).

This "outrageous piece of work", a "funny play", which takes place between "waking and sleeping" (Miller, *Conversations*-Gussow 185) moves in a way that it is impossible to decode who out of its characters is dead and who is still alive. The black bag lady, Adele, a constant presence, unseen by other characters, seems surreal. In the preface, she has been described by the playwright as "neither dead nor alive, but simply Peters' construct" (*Penguin*). She is a symbol of the marginalised black community in America. The audience sees her seated on the floor amid her bags, sipping from a bottle of wine, examining her face in a mirror every now and then, and reading the *Vogue* magazine (*CP* 401). What Adele says is not heard by the other characters of the play but every now and then, the audience hears her comments. Cathy May, Mr. Peters' dead beloved, keeps appearing and Calvin, the man Peters constantly converses with, reminds him of someone.

Peters eventually realises that Calvin is his own dead brother, who had drowned some twenty years ago. The two talk of their childhood even though Calvin refuses any such connection with Peters. Most of the conversation between Peters and Calvin borders on the mundane— in the fashion of absurd plays such as *Waiting for Godot* and the likes of it, wherein characters indulge in conversation that keeps spiralling, leading to nothing: "Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful" (Beckett 27).

> PETERS: . . . I decided to buy shoes. I have very narrow feet.
> CALVIN: Not as narrow as mine, betcha—triple—A.
> PETERS: Quadruple—A. Extending a foot. Narrow as herrings—I said I'd meet her here.
> CALVIN: I used to take a quintuple—A but I don't have time to go running all over the city looking for them anymore . . . I am busy!
> PETERS: Well I'm busy too . . .
> CALVIN: Not as busy as I am.
> PETERS: I assure you, I am just as busy as you are. I got these in that shoe store right on the corner. (*CP* 404)

The decaying old man keeps wondering why exactly he is in this nightclub and Calvin keeps reminding him that he is here to wait for his wife. "IF SHE DOESN'T COME, DOES IT MEAN I CAN'T LEAVE?! WHERE IS MY POOR GODDAMNED WIFE!" (423), the old man exclaims, tired and frustrated.

Coming from an eighty-three-year-old playwright, the play also has strong autobiographical undertones; it can very well be analysed as "a brooding, personal, curmudgeonly fantasia" by Miller (Scanlan 188). Critics compare Cathy May's character

with Monroe figures in Arthur Miller's other plays [xiv]. Just like Kitty, Cathy first appears on stage naked; her glamorous, nude image in high heels, approaches Peters, inducing a broad smile on his face. "Ah yes, how proud of your body—like a new party gown" (*CP* 403), Peters compliments his lost love. Like the Hollywood icon Kitty, even Cathy is shown incapable of independent movement:

> PETERS**:** Could we walk together, darling? Just side by side? I am sure you can get out of this if you exercise. Please—concentrate, darling! (*desperately*). You must try to move more! Here, let me help! . . .
> *(He jumps up and down flapping his arms. She remains inert. He turns to Calvin).* Could you applaud? (405)

Adele, the bag woman, suggests Peters that he drink more to cut his pain; like Leonora, Adele is constantly sipping her alcoholic drink. Larry Tedesco, the shoe store guy, who comes to the nightclub looking for his wife, Cathy May, is according to Miller, "Peters' conjecture as to what kind of man she might have married given her nature" (*Penguin*)[xv]. Like Marilyn Monroe, Cathy May also died very young. In the successive scenes of the play, Peters' pain of lost love is reflected—Cathy may have been long dead but her memories are young and fresh in Peters' heart. Both Larry and Peters are guilty of not being able to give Cathy her share of love and protection while she was still alive.

Other characters, a couple apparently, Leonard and Rose, also walk into the night club and begin conversing with Calvin and Peters. Rose is pregnant and needs to sit; Leonard is her current lover, but not the father of her child—this whole arrangement according to Calvin is "immoral". When they talk to Peters, he keeps wondering if the two are alive or dead. The conversation does not make much sense as it is a mere chunk of digression:

> PETERS: It struck me the other day that everyone I know is sleepy—I wonder if it's something about the times.
> ROSE: Maybe you're low on potassium. You should eat bananas.
> PETERS: I do eat two or three a week for breakfast. Actually I rather like bananas.
> ROSE: You should try to love them. Motivation is important in the diet; bananas are there to be loved. Try eating five a week. Seven or eight would be even better. Or ten.
> PETERS: Isn't that quite a lot of bananas?
> ROSE, *raises one leg in a stretc*h: You only have enough bananas when one more would make you want to throw up. I know about such things, I'm a dancer, dancers need trace elements for the knees. (*CP* 418)

Towards the close of the play, Mrs. Charlotte Peters, Peters' wife, whose name he has been blocking out, appears on the scene; she joins her husband in a "whirlwind of energy" (Abbotson, *Critical* 251). Brantley tags her a "more dynamic emblem of womanhood" when compared to the figure of Cathy May, who appears throughout the play rather weak and abused ("Meaning"). A former Rockettes dancer, now a decorator by profession, Charlotte has plans of buying and redoing the nightclub. In the middle of much mundane talk on bananas, mahogany toilets, laundry methods, and vacuum cleaners, Peters keeps struggling with his search for "the subject". His comment to Leonard, "I truly wonder whether the country could be saved if people could stay on the same subject for more than twenty seconds" (*CP* 428), holds value in terms of highlighting the modern day degeneration keenly observed by the old and experienced. Women keep moving into the powder room and men keep forgetting their wives' names. Peters frantically asks them all to think of the "subject", and the actors form a scene until Rose calls him "Papa":

> ROSE: Papa?
> PETERS (*opens his eyes, listens*): Yes?
> ROSE: Please stay.
> PETERS (*straight ahead*): I'm trying!
> ROSE: I love you, Papa.
> PETERS: I'm trying as hard as I can. I love you, darling . . . *I wonder could that be the subject!* (436)

The "subject" Mr. Peters was looking for is "love" (Abbotson, *Critical* 249). With a hint of building a new nightclub, his daughter, Rose, being pregnant, and a warmth of family unity felt at the end of the play, leaves both Peters and the audience with some hope and uncertainty. According to de Beauvoir, human life bears "value so long as one attributes value to the life of others, by means of love, friendship, indignation, compassion" (*Coming of Age* 541). Scanlan calls this play from Miller's oeuvre, a "theatrical summation" of all his recent work that "preceded" this one (187). *Mr. Peters' Connections* thus explicitly demonstrates how "a pattern can be born in the formlessness of life that reveals no inherent order or purpose" (Centola, "Chaos" 28), and the playwright's message to his audience remains intact: love is essential to battle the modern day evils such as war and greed. The quest for "the unbroken tissue that was man and society, a single unit rather than two" is mandatory (Miller, *Timebends* 182).

Despite being quite different from each other in terms of their subject matter, all the selected plays invariably demonstrate how "paralysis" is the curse of human existence—a state where the stasis of one unit leads to a larger immobility and numbness. In a paralysed

world, there cannot be a guarantee for growth or contentment. “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”, the glorified promises of the United States Declaration of Independence, the birth rights of every American citizen, seem to be hollow assurances given this state of brokenness and despair. Until individuals learn the importance of concern, empathy, and love for fellow beings, both “fish” and the “water” shall stay polluted.

Chapter 3

"Othered" and Alienated: Thematic Concerns

As highlighted in the previous chapter, Arthur Miller's selected later plays portray men and women as embodiments of the malaise and vulnerability of the society at large. His characters struggle with stereotypes—racial and otherwise, with social contracts of family and marriage, and with various cultural standards that prompt material chase and narcissism. Inevitably, amidst their many scuffles, these men and women lose grip on human intimacy and love, the ingredients essential for healthy human survival and stability.

According to Sydney Finkelstein, the chief distinction of Arthur Miller's plays lies in his portrayal of "human conflicts" being fought "against the background of the great social issues of the day"; however, despite his status as a social dramatist, Miller's plays chiefly depict the predicament of the individual, which Finkelstein sees as streaming against the very concept and motive of social drama (252). On the other hand, Paul Blumberg, who considers literature to be a "rich form of social documentation", insists that Arthur Miller's plays be appreciated for the sociological insights they provide—for his dramatic discourse has the maximum to convey to present day sociologists (292). The playwright has himself often recapitulated his conviction about the vainness of exploring the "psychological side of man in vacuo", with little attention to his social environment (293).

These diverse and often contrasting critical opinions along with a comprehensive analysis of Arthur Miller's dramatic canon help establish the fact that he is both a playwright of the individual and society—for in his narration, there indeed lies no separation between the two. His drama is replete with themes of isolation and alienation experienced by men and women in the modern times. The exploration of the "otherness" experienced by American citizens quite naturally draws attention to how the theme of alienation is quite integral to the very origin and development of the American society itself, whose foundation was laid by people having alienated themselves from their own land to begin anew. Also, as is well-known, the foundation of America was laid on the destruction and alienation of several Natives of the land, who under the threat of the foreign invader were rendered "other" in their own natural soil.

In conventional terminology of our everyday lives, "alienation" points towards a lack of belongingness or to simply a feeling of estrangement. There are varied forms of

alienation experienced by human beings and in different disciplines, the meaning of the term also varies considerably. For instance, in terms of law, alienation refers to a transfer or loss of property while in psychiatry, it simply means "loss of identity" (*Oxford Dictionary*). In the realm of social and psychological sciences, "alienation" is used both as a term and concept. It is often used to denote the feeling of separateness and otherness one experiences in his social setting.

Even though both classical and modern theorists have contributed to the development of "alienation" as a concept, there cannot be a fixed definition allocated to the term. In *Marx and Alienation: Essays on Hegelian Themes*, Sean Sayers also states that alienation "is not a definite philosophical school at all" (1). Yet, the common thread among all theories is that of man's separation—from others and from self. It stands for the feeling of loss of one's basic humanity as a result of being stuck in a world of numbness and meaninglessness.

According to Walter Kauffman, alienation is "is neither a disease nor a blessing but, for better or worse, a central feature of human existence" (xv). Rosenstock and Kutner define it as an individual's "negative form of involvement in a social system" for when the individual, despite being acquainted and connected to the system, recognizes that the system cannot really facilitate him to achieve his life goals or provide satisfaction, there is bound to be a feeling of alienation (398). To Charles Taylor, alienation indicates "an indefinable sense of loss", where life just appears "impoverished"—a condition in which society and human nature look "mutilated" (11).

Friedrich Hegel is known as one of the first philosophers to have used and developed the concept of "alienation". In his texts, Hegel outlines the progression of "alienation" in human history, applying the concept of the estrangement of humanity from itself. In his most noted text, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, alienation has been described as an "ontological fact", that is predominantly based in the human nature itself. He explains the concept by exemplifying the estrangement of humanity from itself to "the transitional period between the fall of the Greek city-states and the coming of Christianity; and above all to the bourgeois society around him" (qtd in Novack 58); thus sticking mostly to spiritual and religious meaning of the term. In Hegelian philosophy, the process through which the "spirit" isolates itself is termed as "externalization"; in this course, the spirit ultimately realizes its true "potentialities" and attains "self-consciousness" (qtd in Churchich 13, 37). And "self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged" (Hegel 111).

It is quite evident that Karl Marx derives the "dialectical logic" from Hegel, but unlike the senior philosopher, Marx believes economic structures of the society to be the main "driving forces" of human life (Churchich 16). He prefers to define alienation in terms of the socio-economic relations instead of seeing it in relation to the human mind or soul (17). However, one ground on which both Marx and Hegel seem to mutually agree is that alienation involves "man's absence of control over himself" (37). Both Hegel and Marx suggest that the essence of being a human is linked with humans' connection with others. "The estrangement of man, and in fact every relationship in which man stands to himself, is first realised and expressed in the relationship in which a man stands to other men" (Marx & Engels 77). Alienation to Marx thus lies in "man's loss of independence, his impoverishment, his estrangement from his fellow men, and his involvement in labor that is devoid of any originality, spontaneity, or creativity"— all forces that estrange man from his "true nature" (Kauffman xxiii). It can be separation at various levels—because man is alienated from his self, from society, and from fellow beings (Marx 70). And it can be alienation at several different levels at the same time.

Nonetheless, while Marx discourses extensively on the concept of "alienation" in his earlier texts, in his later texts, he refrains from specifically using the term (Kauffman xvi). Also, Marx seems to have used the term in numerous altered ways; but, in all his texts, the focus always remains— "dehumanization of man" (xxiii). We see this dehumanization and separation as central to Miller's portrayal in the selected plays, in which characters suffer alienation and numbness as a result of various structures of the society that give rise to the divisions of class, race, gender, etc. Therefore, even "family", that should be one's refuge from external oppressive structures and biases, seems to be adding to individual woes.

Perhaps the comments of German philosopher, Erich Fromm, best explain the individual and social condition portrayed in the selected plays. According to Fromm also, "it is the alienation from oneself, from one's fellow man, and from nature" that is the malady of the modern times (*Zen* 86). Fromm believes we are currently living in a world where people are not sick in the conventional way, like they used to be in the old times. Today's "sick" are unfortunately those who can "function socially" and still undergo "maladie du siècle", which he describes as "the malaise, the inner deadness" of the human race (85). These "new" kind of patients are frequent to psychoanalysts and often unaware of their illness; they often confuse their symptoms for their problems (856). As is clearly visible in the selected plays, clinical depression, psychosomatic paralysis, bad marriages,

etc. are just some symptoms and not the problems and yet, we see the characters struggling to cure the symptoms and not the underlying problems. Miller's dramatic vision is aimed at unravelling the problems through a concurrent and vivid portrayal of the symptoms—that point towards a collective illness of the individual and his society.

The playwright points out several aspects of the American society and culture that he sees detrimental to individual identity and happiness. And foremost among the distresses of American citizens is the burden of a "hyphenated" existence, a dual identity: "ethnic" and American. America seen through the playwright's eyes is both the land of "race" and "racism", breeding a culture of "otherness" and alienation, causing irreparable damage to its citizens. Thus, offering in his plays a kaleidoscope of America's very many people, Miller realistically yet compassionately portrays the immigrants' struggles to assimilate, to somehow fit into the American mainstream. This trauma of being "othered" and alienated on the basis of race is probably the most prominent theme that can be observed in the selected plays.

America, the haven of unrestrained prospects for the immigrants, is also the land of disillusionment and estrangement. For the "ethnic" groups of America—the Jews, the Italians, the Irish, the Puerto Ricans, the Mexicans, and so on and so forth, the American ''melting pot'' has indeed turned out to be a "salad bowl" (Pagan 91). Racial stereotyping appears to be an integral part the American life and thought process, even though it is not a concern commonly and openly addressed by many.

The extensively popular version of America as an "all-encompassing" land is totally out of sync with truth. With a common American yearning to strip émigrés of their distinct cultural traditions and rituals, the nation has failed to provide these people with a safe and comfortable abode. The émigrés, even those born and educated in America, are constantly under a burden to perform, to wear masks, and to conform with the majority, leaving their own cultural uniqueness aside.

> America is God's crucible, the great Melting Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming . . . here you stand in your fifty groups, with your fifty languages and histories, and your fifty blood hatreds and rivalries. But you won't be long like that, brothers, for these are the fires of God you've come to— these are the fires of God. Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians—into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American . . .
>
> (Zangwill 37)

The Melting-Pot, a 1908 play by Israel Zangwill, made the term "melting pot" a part of America's everyday vocabulary; its theme much in keeping with the times as between

1900 and 1940, “an average of about one million immigrants a year entered the United States” (Gleason 22-3). The play, according to most Americans, represented the true assimilating spirit of the American nation as it promoted the notion that this cross-cultural integration of varied races of America would result in a breed superior to the rest of the world (27).

Technically, the term “melting pot” has its origin in the physical sciences: the idea comes from the image of a hot pot or furnace containing different metals/substances that are heated to produce a new compound. In the process, the various elements of the hot pot lose their original characteristics (Ya’ar 92); likewise, the “ethnic” groups of the United States of America lose some of their basic cultural traits in the process of assimilation, but, at the same time, some of these traits remain intact and some are even redesigned, resulting in a kind of “compound-identity” for the immigrants (93).

Miller quite blatantly ruptures the myth of the “melting pot” for his audience, but in his criticism, his vision is not constricted—for when he speaks for the Jew, he also concurrently speaks for the Swede and the Yankee. This capacity to go beyond “type”, to equitably empathize, and to present a scenario from each side, is perhaps the most striking feature of his playwriting. The selected plays demonstrate how the pressures of “type” destroy the individuals’ chances of establishing “self”; even the mainstream American population suffers the alienating effects of the prevalent racial stereotyping in the country.

A web article published in January 2018 highlights that even though the characters and themes in Miller’s plays are not “overtly Jewish”, he is still seen as the “first American playwright to explore Jewish identity from the prospective of a self-searching Jew” (Singer). Even though the playwright’s Jewish themes often catch most attention, his realistic yet compassionate portrayal of America’s racial issues clarifies that for him, there is indeed no “hyphen”. Wrestling with “otherness” and stereotypes, the characters in his plays, both with or without “hyphenated” identities, appear stranded, broken, and numbed. Thus, the selected later plays do not only show Miller’s concern for a specific racial group but for the humanity at large that is forced to lose individuality in their constant strife to fit in.

Since it is Miller’s Jewish concerns that often draw most attention, it makes sense to begin with how he portrays the Jewish peoples of America in the selected plays. Sylvia and Phillip Gellburg, and Dr. Harry Hyman, the second generation Jewish-American characters of Miller’s relatively more discussed later play, *Broken Glass,* offer different facets of American-Jewishness to the audience. At the heart of this play lies the

claustrophobia of individual identity, an inevitable outcome of a numbed social environment, which only alienates.

However, before delving into Miller's compassionate representation of America's racial tensions, it is crucial to understand what "race" means to an average American citizen and whether or not the American environment is still predominantly "racist". Richard J. Perry believes that a mere cursory look at the American mass media is usually enough to comprehend how "race" continues to be a "compelling issue in the public domain" in the United States of America (ix). In his controversial text, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, Jean Paul Sartre refers to America as "the democratic crucible" (40). Like all other places, even America is the land of potential genocide. And even if there is no genocide, the racial prejudices that grip America's everyday living are also quite fatal to the well-being of its citizens.

In *Antisemitism in America*, Leonard Dinnerstein contends that unlike Europe, American anti-Semitism continually assumes new forms; it is indeed "a real and ignoble part of America's cultural heritage" and just like some heritable disease, it has been transferred from one generation to the next (xix). At the same time, like some "folk tale", racial prejudices against the Jews have also been transmuted and altered to suit particular times and conditions (xix). In Dinnerstein's view, American anti-Semitism has its origins in Christian lessons brought to the country through European migration. And even though American anti-Semitism has expressed itself in innumerable ways all through the American history, Christianity has been its main driving force (179).

Since *Broken Glass* is based in a time when racial anti-Semitism was at its peak in America, it is essential to keep track of the country's ethnic situation at the time of *Kristallnacht.* In the first two decades of the twentieth century, "racism became a central component in the elixir of American anti-Semitic sentiments" (58). The credence that Jews were a completely distinct race with characteristic mental and physical physiognomies and attributes acquired through genetics was commonly accepted in America like everywhere else in the world (58). The repercussions of the first World War left the country cynical of "internationalism"; now Americans began even more than before to detest the "foreigner", whom they saw to be corrupting the country's traditional "values" (78). The Jews were mostly treated with strong dislike and resistance by the upper classes whenever they made any attempts to assimilate into the new American culture (79). Throughout America, there seemed to be a "universal concern" about Jews penetrating esteemed organizations and dwellings (79); these prejudices and "antipathy" against the Jews greatly amplified in the

1930s (113). “From 1939 through 1942 roving gangs of Christian Fronters picketed, and placarded obscene stickers on Jewish-owned retail establishments, desecrated synagogues, and indiscriminately attacked Jewish children and adults on the streets of cities like New York and Boston where sympathetic policemen of Irish background allowed the outrages to continue” (121).

Broken Glass, specifically through the character of Phillip Gellburg, a successful “provider” in the challenging post-Depression era (343), can be studied as a classic commentary on America’s assimilation paralysis. It highlights the brutal impact of racial alienation in America that’s detrimental to human identity and well-being.

However, understanding the assimilation crisis engulfing the American set-up is a complex issue because despite the fact that the country is full of hyphenated names, America harbours a high amount of racial discrimination. In the play, Phillip Gellburg’s relationship with his ethnicity is so complex that it becomes impossible to understand his exact position on his Jewishness (Abbotson, *Thematic* 150). Dr. Hyman easily relates Sylvia’s paralysis with her husband’s identity issues that have caused an emotional and sexual vacuum between the couple. In fact, paralysis of one’s identity through racial alienation is at the centre of the play, and from its very first scene, Arthur Miller’s thematic concerns are evident.

Having spent an entire life Americanizing himself, Sylvia’s husband has evidently “lost touch with his humanity” (151). Gellburg visibly seems to be suffering from “self-hatred” with occasional bouts of longing to be a “super-Jew”—capable of abundant miracles. Phillip’s insecurities related to his racial background are exposed when Margaret Hyman happens to phonate his last name inaccurately:

> MARGARET: . . . It’s nice to meet you finally, Mr. Goldberg.
> GELLBURG: —It’s Gellburg, not Goldberg.
> MARGARET: Oh, I’m sorry.
> GELLBURG: G-e-l-l-b-u-r-g. It’s the only one in the phone book.
> MARGARET: It does sound like Goldberg.
> GELLBURG: But it’s not, it’s Gellburg. A distinction. We are from Finland originally. (*CP* 321-2)

In the twentieth century, many immigrants to America adopted more “acceptable” family names to avoid discrimination and exploitation at the hands of the majority. Even though this trend of changing second names has tremendously decreased in the recent years (Roberts), it has not really changed the racial dynamics of the United States of America.

The stress related to acute suppression of individual identity has crept into all spheres of Phillip Gellburg's life—his public mask is also his private one. "What have you against your face? A Jew can have a Jewish face" (*CP* 374), Sylvia questions him, completely aware of his self-condescension that has taken a toll on their marriage. Like Lawrence Newman, the male protagonist of *Focus*, Phillip Gellburg can only see a "Jew's face" in the mirror (386), the face that he has been trained to both hate and reject. Even though Newman in Miller's novel is not even Jewish, in his quest to separate the Jew, he has ended up "othering" himself. Evidently, both Gellburg and Newman have deeply internalized a negative self-image. Therefore, when Hyman tells Phillip about the existence of Chinese Jews, the latter is infinitely amused: he wonders what a Chinese Jew would look like (381,386). Apparently, Phillip carries only two images of Jews in his head: American Jew and German Jew.

The Jew's Body by historian Sanders Gilman, offers a thorough discussion on the anti-Semitic rhetoric censuring the Jewish body and mind as infested and disease-ridden. According to Gilman, "where and how a society defines a body reflects how those in society define themselves" (170). Utilizing various medical and historical resources, Gilman traces and discusses the origins of various stereotypes related to Jewish voice, feet, and nose. The Jewish community across the world has been alienated and discriminated on the basis of their physical features also. For instance, it is usually the "nose" of a Jew that is censured by people. Regarding the changing perceptions related to "Jewish noses" in twentieth century America's popular culture, Bernice Schrank talks about how the "Jewish nose", that "loathsome" facial feature of a Jew, continues to be the most common means of damagingly typecasting the Jewish community as a whole; in the 1940s and '50s, many American Jews resorted to surgically altering their noses through rhinoplasty (24,29). Schrank also states that once an individual is identified as an "ethnic", his face is often read through the filter of his race, for "ethnic looks may be embedded in appearance, intrinsic to the individual, but they are also dependent on the gaze of the observer" (22). The ethnics of America internalize these prejudices and thus see themselves only through the eyes of others around them.

In a country where a Jew would not be accepted as an equal fellow countryman, he is bound to resort to screening himself, thus crippling his individual identity in the process. Having "severed his connection" with other Jews, Gellburg has completely isolated himself, yet his own Jewishness is inescapable (Abbotson, *Thematic* 150). He has a Jewish

spouse, he speaks Yiddish, and even his material success is more valuable to him because he is an "ethnic" in America (150).

To gain acceptance of the majority, the ethnic populace often feels the need to blindly ape them. Phillip's WASP [xvi] boss, Mr. Case, looks down upon the Jews; and because Mr. Case is who Phillip wishes to emulate, he indulges in prejudices and hatred against his own community. He constantly attempts to prove it to everyone that he is a man of independent choices, and not of "Jewish" choices. Under immense pressures of mixing with the white populace, Phillip alienates himself from his true identity. As is mentioned in the play, his face is usually "pale" (*CP* 322), which is certainly a sign of repression. Even when Hyman jovially calls him a Republican, he defensively retorts, "why? —the Torah says a Jew has to be a Democrat? I didn't get where I am by agreeing with everybody" (326). Undoubtedly, to Phillip, it is not a matter of joviality; because he wishes to see himself only as a very successful Jewish-American—a Jew totally unlike other Jews.

Phillip's pride in his son, Jerome, serving as a captain in the American army, is also dominated by the thought of a Jewish boy being in a profession "unconventional" for the Jewish community. The feeling that his own Jewish boy can very well be "the first Jewish general in the United States Army", is a satisfying thought of accomplishment to Gellburg (337). Likewise, in being the only Jewish employee at his firm, *Brooklyn Guarantee and Trust*, and the only Jew to have set foot on his boss's deck, Gellburg finds his nirvana. The attitude of the white majority is reflected in how Mr. Case communicates with Phillip:

> GELLBURG: They're bringing him out to Fort Sill . . . some kind of lecture on artillery.
> CASE: Really, now! Well, isn't that nice! . . . Then he's really intending to make a career in the army.
> GELLBURG, *surprised Case isn't aware*: Oh absolutely.
> CASE: Well that's good, isn't it. It's quite surprising for one of you people—for some reason I'd assumed he just wanted the education. (346)

Evidently, to Case, Phillip is always a Jew first; he sees all Jews as one "people" and not as individuals, who can be different from each other. However, in order to keep his job and to fit in, Phillip has no option but to ignore his employer's demeaning attitude.

Phillip Gellburg may make strong statements such as "I don't run with the crowd, I see with these eyes, nobody else's" (325), but in saying so, he merely fools himself. Both Miller's audience and Phillip's wife manage to see through this façade; his "self-hatred" and his hyperbolic vanity in his success as an American Jew reflect the destructive aspects of ethnic adaptation in America.

The predicament of being Jewish-American is clearly articulated through Phillip's collapse in Case's office after he has a painful confrontation with him (Egerton, "Sick" 170). It devastates him to realise that Mr. Case suspects him of joining hands with a Jewish acquaintance to cause his company the loss of a business deal. What's ironical is how contrastingly the Gellburgs are triggered into shock: while Sylvia is paralysed connecting her misery to that of the German Jews, her husband's heart collapses "under the dilemma of being Jewish in New York" (170). Then again, it is never just one day or one business deal that causes such a breakdown; it is years of trying hard every day to be a perfect "American", of melting into the proverbial "pot" that damages the individual.

Phillip's heart-stroke certainly helps him see his entire life in perspective; he confronts the lies he has been living and the masks he has had to wear to fit into America's white milieu. He confides in Hyman about how Mr. Case has been exploiting him for all these years:

> GELLBURG: . . . He made a fool of me. It's infuriating. I tell you—I never wanted to see it this way but he goes sailing around on the ocean and meanwhile I'm foreclosing Brooklyn for them. That's what it boils down to. You got some lousy rotten job to do, get Gellburg, send in the Yid. Close down a business, throw somebody out of his home . . . And now to accuse me . . . (*CP* 379-80)

During the post-Depression years, America's Jewish populace faced a relatively more acute unemployment situation, forcing them to mask their identities.[xvii] To be a "provider" in the time of crisis has seriously taken a toll on Gellburg.

It is beautiful to observe how Miller chooses to introduce us to the theme of racial anti-Semitism from all possible angles in the play. To offer a contrast to the "self-hating" Jew, he brings to stage Harry Hyman, who is also both Jewish and American and yet, very different from Phillip Gellburg. While Phillip feels that "being a Jew is a full-time job" (381), Hyman does not attach so much weightage to his ethnicity. Phillip is certain that Hyman's relaxed attitude saves him from the pressures associated with being Jewish in America. The physician's flamboyant, "unconventional" personality renders Phillip awestruck. However, despite himself being a victim of racial discrimination, Phillip does not flinch from racially judging Hyman's wife: just like Mr. Case sees Phillip only as a Jew, even Phillip sees Margaret Hyman only as a *shiksa* [xviii]:

> GELLBURG: But how'd you come to marry a *shiksa*?
> HYMAN: We were thrown together when we were interning, and we got very close, and . . . well she was a good partner, she helped me, and still does. And I loved her.

GELLBURG: —a Jewish woman couldn't help you? (381)

In the process of seeing themselves through others' eyes, the "ethnics" end up imbibing various stereotypes related to them: they inadvertently typecast themselves. The way most people react to Hyman's lifestyle and personal choices, reflects the prevalence of racial stereotyping even within the same community. Gellburg's remarks on Hyman, such as "a Jew in love with horses is something I never heard of" (381), and "I wouldn't know you were Jewish except for your name" (381), clearly exemplify this negative influence.

Even Hyman had to bear the brunt of American anti-Semitism: he was forced to go to Germany to complete his medical studies (352). In those times, American medical schools put quotas on Jews, which restricted Jewish admissions to many American universities, specially to medical and engineering schools. Not only this, Jews were restricted from owning property in certain areas, and were denied membership in many clubs, communities, and unions (Schrank 20). Thus, while analysing Hyman, the audience is bound to wonder: if the physician's horse-riding, his choice of a non-Jewish wife, his relative splendour (when compared with Phillip), are also some kind of a façade—is Hyman emulating the *gentile* or is it really him?

Sylvia Gellburg's character in the play, as another representation of American Jewishness, brings to stage the feminine side of this "hyphenated" identity crisis. As a Jewish woman, she must have been exposed to her society's "double otherness" but still, unlike her husband, Sylvia openly embraces her ethnicity. Her Jewishness and her religious and cultural identity are just one part of her existence; therefore, she neither tries to avoid thinking about it the way Hyman does, nor tries to undo it like Phillip does. She feels one with the German Jews in their sufferings, and it is a connection that others around her, both Jews and *gentiles*, fail to understand.

Though it cannot be absolutely ascertained, perhaps, the Jewish women of those times found it easier to continue assimilating without losing their "ethnic" identity. As Sylvia was asked to give up her professional life right after her son, Jerome, was born, she has mostly been homebound. And since it is men who spend more time in the world outside, the impact of stereotypes on them is bound to be considerably different. However, Sylvia also cannot completely save herself from the prevalent racial stigma as her husband's crisis of identity becomes her curse.

Among the selected plays, *Broken Glass* may be the most explicit discussion of American anti-Semitism but some of the other plays of the same period also have Jewish

characters, wherein the concern has been obliquely addressed by the playwright. *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* also demonstrates how "race" is central to the American milieu and how the alienating effects of "racism" can be observed in people's everyday conversations—in which they easily and mostly unwittingly typecast and isolate each other.

Abbotson finds Lyman Felt to be a completely "American figure, multiethnic in background and sympathies" (*Critical* 308). The son of an Albanian father and a Jewish mother, Lyman embodies identity conflicts typical of Americans with dual "ethnic" backgrounds. His first wife, Theodora, is a WASP while his second wife, Leah, is a Jew. A sample conversation from the play, an initial exchange between Leah and Lyman, throws light on how the citizens of America are bound to look at themselves more as types and less as people, destroying each other's basic humanity in their subtle yet damaging ways:

> LEAH : Then your mother was Jewish.
> LYMAN : And the source of all my conflicts. In the Jewish heart is a lawyer and a judge, in the Albanian a bandit defying the government with a knife.. . .You know?—l've never before with a Jewish girl .
> LEAH : Well, you're my first Albanian. (*CP* 231)

One of the reasons why Theodora is not much liked by Lyman's Jewish mother is that her son "didn't marry Jewish" (210). In her notes on the play, Abbotson highlights the fact that since Jewish heritage passes on "matrilinearly" ("Naming" 11), Bessie, Lyman's daughter from his marriage with Theo, cannot be taken as Jewish, technically. This anguish of having let his Jewish mother down stays with Lyman, encouraging him to compensate for the loss by marrying a much younger Jewish woman, Leah, and fathering a son with her.

Highlighting the traditional Jewish perceptions regarding marriage and family, Lantz and O'Hara write: "being a very small minority in a society dominated by Christianity meant that Jews were confronted with the problem of whether they could maintain a sense of religious and cultural identity" (250). Since the beginning of their immigration to America, this "dilemma" of retaining a Jewish identity in a new land could never be "resolved" (249); therefore, most immigrants attempted to preserve their identity through the social institutions of "marriage" and "family". Naturally, their racial insecurities made Jews look questioningly at intermarriages [xix]; "marriage within the faith was of course very important. Yet it was also important to make a success of marriage" (251-2).

Lyman Felt's case is one such example of enormous insecurity related to race and ethnicity: the guilt of saddening his Jewish mother lies so heavy on Lyman that he does not

let Leah abort their child conceived out of the wedlock. He names this child "Alexander Benjamin", after his own father and Jewish grandmother, even before the child is born (*CP* 220).

In his unconscious mind, Lyman's dead Albanian father also bears a strong presence; therefore, whenever dreaming or hallucinating, the bigamist hears his father's reprimands: ". . . why you talking so much to your mother? —she don't know nothing. She don't want to go Florida with me, she says one state is enough. Stupid woman. I thought a Jewish woman gonna be smart. You both a big disappointment to me . . .." (224). Jews being naturally smart, shrewd, and exploitative, is again a highly prejudiced yet commonly established image of the community. Calling this attitude "a problem still", Sander L. Gilman in his book, *Smart Jews: The Construction of the Image of Jewish Superior Intelligence*, refutes the whole idea of race being connected to intelligence. According to Gilman, the myth of Jewish superior intelligence, which he sees as a product of "biological racism", has been quickly absorbed in the racial scientific discourse and is still widely accepted (*Smart Jews* 6). In fact, Jewish "intelligence" is mostly viewed as a negative racial attribute; by calling them intelligent, people tag Jews "clever". And even when their "intelligence" is spoken of positively, it is not viewed as inherent but rather as a group acquired quality (7). For instance, it is commonly assumed that Jews are "intelligent" and therefore successful—both because they follow the "right rules" (7).

Clara is also replete with racial references, portraying identity conflicts faced by American citizens both "ethnic" and otherwise. The play brings to stage two complex male characters, Albert Kroll and Detective Lew Fine, both visibly crushed under the burdens of a prejudiced and brutal American life. Hardened by the harsh realities related to his Jewish background, Lew Fine is forced to view human lives as mere numbers. He casually says to Kroll, "we're all one step away from a statistic" (*CP* 30), urging him to move on from the shock of his daughter's murder. Based on how Fine talks, he can easily be perceived as a cold, detached human being, but, to understand his angst, it is essential to consider the nature of his job as a homicide detective and his "ethnic" background that exposes him to the dark side of humanity every hour of the day. His unemotional, practical, and often seemingly negative outlook to things and people is a natural outcome of the life he has led as the "other" in his country (Abbotson, *Critical* 99).

> FINE: . . . I took the Sergeant's exam three times; I know I got perfect grades three times, but I was one of the Kikes, and they gave me my stripes out of sheer

> embarrassment. I was on a par with an Arab bucking for Sergeant in the Israeli police department. But it's nothing to be sad about, right? Unless you're going to be way up there looking down at the rest of us down here. (*CP* 43)

Even though Kroll refrains from naming Clara's Hispanic boyfriend as her murderer, Fine keeps pushing him to blurt the man's name out. He reminds Kroll that it is only "greed and race" that run the world (42). Fine seems to have bitterly come to terms with his country's bigotry and the omnipresence of human evil: "the black for the black, and the white for the white. Gentile for Gentile and the Jew for the Jew" (43). He tells Kroll about how his son was shot dead because of some debt related propaganda created against him. Fine feels that perhaps he really "failed to simplify" things for his son the way they were simplified for him (43). The audience is left to wonder if that debt related propaganda was created against his son because of his Jewish background.

Albert Kroll, an embodiment of the American mainstream that actually alienates the "ethnic", takes the whole theme of racial alienation to a different level. In Kroll we encounter America's "non-hyphenated" population's need to be racially "fair" and politically "correct" at all times. Miller depicts how this attitude can be as hazardous and numbing as the pressure of being "ethnic" in the country. Alleging a Hispanic as a criminal somewhere conflicts with Kroll's "well-managed" public image, which is both "benevolent" and "unbiased". According to Bigsby, since Kroll always pretended in front of his daughter to be a "saviour" of humanity, in blocking out the criminal's name, it is his own name the father protects (*Critical* 362).

As a young man in the army, Kroll saved his black company from a lynch mob; and it is a story Clara grew up listening to:

> KROLL: . . . and one day the Colonel, who was from Alabama . . . asks for a volunteer to take command of a black company . . . of course, nobody wanted a black company. But Grandpa'd always had Negro people working in the nursery and, you know, I'd been around them all my life and always got along with them, and I thought maybe with them I'd have somebody to talk to, so I raised my hand . . . (*CP* 45)

Since Kroll himself had laid the foundation of Clara's humanity, even when his daughter got involved with a rehabilitating criminal, the father could not directly stop her. Kroll now works as the Chairman of the Zoning Board, where his work is confined to keeping the poor and the black away from "posh" localities. Like Lyman Felt, Kroll has also lost the idealism of his youth that encouraged him to stand one with the minorities. Fine pushes Kroll to accept his double standards on the subject of "race":

> FINE: So it's a race problem.
> KROLL: Not just race, it's to keep out less affluent families or let them in.
> FINE: And where are you on this?
> KROLL: We've got to let them in. I don't know what else to support. Or you end up with two societies. In fact, we could easily get sued by the Federal Government for housing discrimination if we go to four acres. But the feeling runs very hot on both sides . . . (41)

At the end of this one-act, the devastated father is able to recollect Clara's Hispanic murderer's name: "Luiz Hernandez. Worked at Kennedy. For Pan American", he tells Fine before the curtain falls (47). Even though Kroll's politically "correct" stand costs him his daughter's life, it once again brings him closer to reality by reminding him of who he was and who he *is not.*

In the selected plays, Miller also focuses on the angst of identity experienced by his country's Black populace. As part of America's "othered" American inhabitants, even the Blacks have been perennially relegated. According to Pan-Africanist psychiatrist and philosopher, Frantz Fanon, racism is a system that validates economic exploitation, subjugation, and the supremacy of one nation over another and also of one race by another. He believes that "it is not possible to enslave men without logically making them inferior through and through. And racism is only the emotional, affective, sometimes intellectual explanation of this inferiorization" (Fanon, *African* 50). In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon writes: "he who is reluctant to recognize me opposes me" (170). Fanon's theory is chiefly based on the pride of white people who fail to recognize the blacks as people.

> I am not the one who creates a meaning for myself, but the meaning was already there, pre-existing and waiting for me. It is not with my bad Negro wretchedness, my bad Negro teeth, my bad Negro hunger, that I will model a torch I can set on fire in order to burn down the world, but the torch was there already waiting for that turn of history. (102-3)

While the Jews easily mix with the white mainstream, the blacks are the conspicuous "others" in the country. American sociologist and civil rights activist, W.E. B. Du Bois' theory of the "veil" is grounded on how white people in America see Blacks and yet fail to actually see them. Bois states that white Americans have a "veiled" view of Black Americans based on stereotypes and racial bias. Being a black himself, Du Bois understood very well the struggles of others like himself in a white land; in his text, *The Souls of Black Folk,* he writes:

> . . . in this American world, —a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, —an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (8)

Du Bois firmly asserts that "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line" (32). He expresses particular contempt about white citizens' attitudes towards the blacks—attitudes which are not based on genuine knowledge or engagement with the black community but only on common prejudices. As a result of these prejudices, the black is rendered only half a person in a white environment. "The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, —this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self" (9). Du Bois believes that the struggles of the black community predominantly lie with their strife to be both black and American; in their determination to "not bleach" their "Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism" for the "message of the Negro blood" must not be lost (9).

It is indeed saddening to see how the same standards that sanction "whiteness" essentially demean all persons, places, or things labelled "black" (Jackson 155). America's two-facedness lies engraved in the fact that many of the those who wrote the Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights were themselves slave owners, absolutely comfortable with the "veil"—or perhaps unaware of their own biases. However, the alienation and otherness experienced by blacks in America is as old as the country itself. Also, the plight of the black community is more painful because while other émigrés are allowed Americanization or assimilation, the blacks can never Americanize enough to be treated as complete citizens in the country (Hunter.M 126).

In *Broken Glass*, Mr. Case clubs all Jews together by referring to his Jewish employee as "you people" (*CP* 346); in *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan,* Lyman Felt speaks to his black nurse in the same fashion:

> LYMAN: . . . (*He opens his eyes, gradually taking in the* NURSE.) You black?
> NURSE: That's what they keep telling me.
> LYMAN: You ah. . . RSP?
> NURSE: RN? Yes.
> LYMAN: Good for you. I've got a big training program for you guys, biggest in the industry, and first one to put you in sales . . . (206)

In *The Last Yankee,* John Frick's comment on the mental institution being "awful lot of colored" (284), exemplifies a similarly biased outlook towards the minorities. The money-pinching businessman firmly believes that his wife's fear of the black crime has rendered her clinically depressed: "she started locking up everything I thought maybe it's these Negroes, you know? There's an awful lot of fear around; all this crime" (285-6). Frick's prejudices inhibit his path to a more universal, progressive thought; his shifting of the blame to the Negroes, even though baseless, is strongly ingrained in him through his culture.

Hurwitch and Peffley highlight how the tendency to typecast blacks as criminals is based on people primarily expecting them to be violent, hostile, and criminal (378). Because common masses have a predisposition to typecast Negroes as criminals, when they see blacks, they immediately recollect other episodes where the crime was committed by an African American. And hence, this racial bias against the Negroes continues to breed (378).

In *Mr. Peters' Connections*, Larry Tedesco, the shoe-store man in the play, can also be seen making racist remarks: "the neighbourhood's got a lot of Jews, you know. And Koreans now and Chinks" (*CP* 415). Larry holds the "niggers" responsible for neighbourhood crimes:

> LARRY: In March the niggers busted our window, robbed forty-one pairs of shoes.
> CALVIN: I heard about that.
> LARRY: You heard about it? We're fed up. Fed up!
> ADELE: Us too. (415)

As an "ethnic" group in America, people such as Adele, the black bag lady in the play, are tired too; they are tired of their helplessness, of others' prejudices, of being pigeonholed, and of being black in a white landscape. Adele, a character neither seen nor heard by other characters in the play, is undoubtedly the most accurate depiction of black relegation in the American society. She is nothing more than a black stereotype, representing "a sweep of class and prejudice"; "her drinking, her retort to Larry, and her portrayal as a despairing substitute teacher evidence her frustration with her role in society" (Abbotson, *Critical* 250). In an interview given to Christopher Bigsby, Miller remarked that Adele, like everyone else in this play, is a "construct" of Mr. Peters' mind: like "dust in the air", she exists, but is seldom noticed (*Critical* 408). The remarks that Adele makes to other characters are thus simply unheard and ignored.

To depict Adele's real situation, Miller shows other characters moving through her and past her, without paying her any attention, which clearly reflects how blacks are treated in the American society (409). The audience sees her frequently examine her face in a hand-mirror; Abbotson feels that Adele's mirror is "less for her eyes than for those of the audience" (Abbotson, *Critical* 250). Like everyone else in her country, Adele is not an individual but her skin color, her facial features, her hair, and her race; she thus bears the curse of being unheeded and disregarded.

Even though *The Last Yankee* is predominantly a commentary on the increasing problem of clinical depression in America, the play also obliquely throws light on how modern America still grapples with various racial tensions between the immigrant and the majority. The Swedes in the country may not be "others" like Jews and blacks are, but still they see the majority as their oppressors. Patricia Hamilton, a second- generation Swedish American, is struck by a common immigrant dilemma: "what did we come to America for?". Since America to the immigrant population is this land of riches and limitless opportunities, most émigrés are bound to feel disillusioned when they are faced with harsh realities exposing them to estrangement and apathy of the American society.

A miserable victim of "American expectations", Patricia blames her Yankee husband, Leroy Hamilton, for not trying hard enough to accomplish himself materially. Leroy can understand his wife's illness to be directly connected to her family's impractically high expectations; but, for Patricia, Leroy is evidently very passive. She relates his relaxed conduct, his attitude of not suing others, and being non-competitive to his Yankee lineage. In a way, Patricia feels a kind of animosity against her husband as "Yankee" to her only stands for the majority that constantly mocked the Swedish and looked down upon them (Griffin 178).

> PATRICIA: . . . It's just that he's got really well-to-do relatives and he simply will not accept anyone's help. I mean you take the Jews, the Italians, Irish— they've got their Italian-Americans, Irish-Americans, Hispanic-Americans— they stick together and help each other. But you ever hear of Yankee-Americans? Not on your life. Raise his taxes, rob him blind, the Yankee'll just sit there all alone getting sadder and sadder. . .. (*CP* 294)

Patricia's anguish is a natural outcome of the American émigrés' assimilation struggles of several years—finding a place for oneself in a foreign land is never too easy. She has unwittingly inherited this distress from her family. While the remarks made by Patricia's father such as "no Yankee can ever be good enough for a Swedish girl" (305-6) lie fresh in

Leroy's memory, even Patricia fails to rise above the prejudices her community had to face as the "others" in the country:

> PATRICIA: Well, the Yankees *were* terrible to us.
> LEROY: That's a hundred years ago, Pat.
> PATRICIA *(starting to anger)*: You shouldn't keep denying this! —They paid them fifty cents a week and called us dumb Swedes with strong backs and weak minds and did nothing but make us ridiculous. (306)

Irrespective of what Leroy says, racial stereotyping and prejudices against the immigrants continue to be an integral aspect of everyday American living. He hopes that he is "the last Yankee so people can start living today instead of a hundred years ago" (306). Miller's portrayal facilitates us to look empathetically at Leroy Hamilton, highlighting how being a Yankee with no other "ethnic" background puts him in a rather isolated spot (Abbotson, *Critical* 217). But then again, the whole system of "family lines" and "race" is so ingrained in the very fabric of the American nation that even a seemingly well-balanced and mature, Leroy cannot completely save himself from lineage-based prejudices. For instance, Leroy feels enraged that a Chapman committed the theft of his valuable Stanley chisel. According to him, the Chapmans should not be committing any wrongs, because like the Hamiltons, they are also a long-standing family line in America (*CP* 304). Thus, the same Leroy who resents the attention drawn by his famous lineage, sees the thief only as a "Chapman" and not as an individual defaulter.

Arthur Miller through his plays consistently insists that perhaps it is too easy to fall prey to the usual typecasting tendencies prevalent in the American society and that these racially biased opinions and attitudes lie heavy on individual identity. Thus, speaking simultaneously and impartially from all sides, the playwright puts forward: America is certainly *not* "God's crucible, the great Melting Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming!"; the American that "God is making" is nowhere to be found (Zangwill 37-8).

Yet, to see the evil of racism as an exclusively American phenomenon would be unfair as "most modern nations have confronted their own versions of racism" (Perry xi). Arthur Miller, in his 1986 preface to his novel, *Focus* (1945), echoes the same sentiment in relation to the universal existence of prejudice and racism in the world (45). Right from his only published novel that addressed American anti-Semitism prevalent during the 1940s to his later plays, Miller's ability to walk in the shoes of others (Pagan 93) has remained quite intact.

Typecasting, stereotyping, and discriminating contribute to human trauma and helplessness but this ordeal is never confined to racial biases only—there are other pigeonholes as well, such as the ones related to "gender". Along with ethnic discrimination, the selected plays also obliquely depict the damage done to human beings because of gender based "otherness" that women are constantly subjected to. In her seminal text, *The Second Sex,* feminist author, Simone de Beauvoir stresses upon how different are the lives of women and men and how relegated is the status of women in direct comparison to that of men. In de Beauvoir's view, the possibilities and opportunities open to a woman are mostly inadequate and substandard because of the prevalence of governing patriarchal ideas and values.

In her introduction to *The Second Sex,* de Beauvoir begins her discussion by positing a question in front of the reader: "what is a woman?" (13). And then onwards her entire thesis highlights how woman is only thought of as a "womb" and nothing beyond. Though it has been many years since de Beauvoir's first feminist discourse, the question of woman's real identity still remains unresolved. And looking at how patriarchy is still quite dominant in the world, it is apparent that the problem of women's subservience, their alienation and "otherness" is not going to be resolved anytime soon. According to de Beauvoir, it is a woman's biological "peculiarities"—her "ovaries" and her "uterus" that trap her and isolate her (15). Like a Jew to the anti-Semite is an "other" and a Negro a plain "inferior" to the white American, a woman is also a "stranger"— she is "other" (16). However, women's position of subservience is even more appalling as unlike other marginalized groups, women constitute fifty percent of humanity (17).

In a patriarchal social environment, a woman is forced to view herself only in relation to her male counterparts; likewise, even the man sees himself in relation to her, but, while he feels superior through her, she only feels like an "inessential" serving the "essential" (16). "He is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other" (16). In *All Said and Done* (1972), de Beauvoir writes that "all male ideologies are directed at justifying the oppression of women, and women are so conditioned by society that they consent to this oppression" (462). This kind of social environment is bound to make women feel demeaned and unanchored—experiencing a kind of emotional vacuum.

One only needs to focus a little to realize how beautifully and realistically Miller addresses the theme of women's alienation without ever making any loud, concrete statement about this concern. In fact, the playwright is often censured by feminist critics for portraying women as subservient, but, perhaps what the playwright aims to do is just

portray the alienation experienced by women as he sees it. Almost all female characters of the selected plays are reflections of the harms of gender inequality prevalent in the American society, a state that reflects the condition of women in most other societies and countries of the world. While Sylvia, Patricia, Karen, and Theodora can be viewed as victims of the patriarchal setup and of static gender roles that are constantly imposed on them, Kitty, Leah, and Cathy May are shown suffering objectification in the hands of men. Whether Miller portrays women of the 1930s' America, such as Sylvia Gellburg, or women of the 1960s, such as Kitty, or women of the 1980s, such as Theodora and Leah, or women of the 1990s, such as Patricia and Karen, they are portrayed invariably in a subordinate position to their male counterparts. The husband-characters of these plays such as John Frick, Phillip Gellburg, and Lyman Felt behave as though it is these women's prime responsibility to react to their impulses and notions. When they stop responding, they are deemed unfit to live with—are tagged thankless, depressed, and useless. That Miller's male characters are also suffering cannot be questioned, but it is the women characters of these plays, who lift heavier burdens and demonstrate the numbness—that's both physical and emotional. Therefore, it is important to analyse the alienation experienced by these women in terms of their social environments, keeping an eye on the male-controlled format of their society that continually damages them.

In *Broken* Glass, through the puzzle of Sylvia Gellburg's hysterical paralysis, Miller gives the audience a realistically convincing picture of the then Jewish-American society of the late 1930s where women had no choice but to succumb to oppressive gender roles. To the 'hysteric', her problem is undefinable—to others, undecipherable. A "*buxom, capable, and warm*" (*CP* 334) Brooklyn housewife, is confined to a wheelchair, suffering a "problem that has no name" (Friedan 15).

> HARRIET: . . . You feel *something*, though, don't you?
> SYLVIA (*pause, she lifts her face*): Yes . . . but inside, not on the skin. (*Looks at her legs.*) . . . I seem to have an ache, not only here but . . . (*She runs her hands down her trunk.)* My whole body seems . . . I can't describe it. It's like I was just born and I . . . didn't want to come out yet. Like a deep, terrible, aching . . .
> (*CP* 334-5)

Sylvia's paralysed condition not only embodies America's inaction to the Jewish cause but also her society's inertia towards the cause of women. As mentioned previously, her husband, Phillip Gellburg, and other members of the family blame the newspapers for her

paralysis, realising little that her sickness has something to do with her life-long subjugation as a woman.

At the play's outset, Phillip discusses Sylvia's illness with Dr. Harry Hyman, recollecting how almost nine days ago, his wife became paralysed just when the couple were stepping out for a movie: ". . . her legs turned to butter. I couldn't stand her up. Kept falling around like a rag doll. I had to carry her into the house. And she kept apologizing . . .", Phillip says, *"weeping"* (329). His narration acquaints the audience with the regular domesticity of the Gellburgs' lives before the paralysis struck: Sylvia kept the house, her husband made a good living, and the two occasionally went out to movies, etcetera.

Her sudden illness acts a "catalyst" that destabilizes the routine of their marriage (Furst 130). Now she mostly rests or reads; there is a maid to help her with bathing and other chores, and her sister, Harriet, comes to help her in the evenings. Phillip does the laundry and shops for groceries, all by himself, along with performing his professional duties at his highly demanding job. Sylvia is suspected to be feigning her paralysis because she apparently looks quite happy and comfortable to her family; both Phillip and Harriet testify for the same when they talk to Hyman.

Harry Hyman explains to Phillip the nature of his wife's psychosomatic illness, saying ". . . hysteria comes from the Greek word for the womb because it was thought to be a symptom of female anxiety. Of course it isn't . . ." (327). Egerton draws attention to how Hyman both identifies hysteria to be native to women and denies its connection to female sexuality at the same time ("Sick" 188). The physician also clarifies that "hysterical doesn't mean she screams and yells . . ." (*CP* 327), which is a kind of repudiation of Phillip's various initial queries thrown at the doctor:

> GELLBURG: You can tell it to me; is she crazy?
> HYMAN: Phillip, are you? Am I? In one way or another, who isn't crazy? The main difference is that our kind of crazy still allows us to walk around and tend to our business. But who knows? — people like us may be the craziest of all.
> GELLBURG, *scoffing grin*: Why!
> HYMAN: Because we don't know we're nuts, and the other kind does. (327)

Historically, "hysteria" has been a successful ploy to demean and alienate women. It is a label bequeathed on women's sexuality by male physicians: the "hysterization of women's bodies" (Foucault 104) has been one of the crucial features of psychiatric and medical power. Categorised as the sickness of the "wandering uterus" (Thiher 67), "hysteria" has been typically seen as a "feminine disorder" (Showalter, "Hysteria" 286)—

its connection with women is established rather harshly, practically as a form of censure of the female body and mind. A man does not have a uterus that can wander (Showalter, *Hystories* 64). In fact, the various symptoms of hysteria were believed to be representing the "capriciousness" of the female nature (Showalter, "Hysteria" 286). In numerous initial studies, the man who showed "hysteric" symptoms was seen as "unmanly, womanish, or homosexual" (289), thus clearly equating "womanhood" to "sickliness". Since doctors firmly believed all "womanly" ailments to be originating from their "soft and spongy flesh and excess blood", "intercourse and/or childbirth" were seen as a hysteric's main cures (24).

In the twentieth century, the traditional opinions that blame a woman's biology for hysteria, only got "mutated into more psychological portraits that link hysteria with *femininity* —with a range of "feminine" personality traits" (Showalter, "Hysteria" 287). In Miller's play, Dr. Hyman's knowledge about the ailment seems relatively progressive for his times as he believes that it is not only women who can be "hysterics", but still, for the treatment procedure, the physician takes the traditional route by relating Sylvia's paralysis with her sexual frustrations. Choosing to "talk turkey" (*CP* 327) with Phillip, Hyman suggests him that "sex could be connected" to Sylvia's distress (328). Phillip, rather "*flushed"* (329), chooses to lie to Hyman and says, "yes, we have relations" (328); he is visibly *"relieved to be off the other subject"* (329) when the talk shifts to Sylvia's obsession with the pictures of the Nazi persecutions. In the puzzle of Sylvia's hysteria, *Kristallnacht* works as a "red herring" (Furst 131).

Feminist psychoanalysts, writers, and critics, argue that hysteria is an outcome of women's "oppressive social roles" and not of "their bodies or psyches" (Showalter "Hysteria" 287). In *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 18301980,* Showalter discusses how mental sickness came to be perceived explicitly as a "female" disease in the 19th century. Relating women's biology to mental deviance, the society succeeded in overpowering women; treated as the weaker and vulnerable sex, women were kept out of professions, denied equal political and civil rights, and dominated in every possible sphere (Showalter, *Malady* 72-3). Sylvia Gellburg's condition in the play clearly corresponds with Showalter's description of "hysterics" and their close family members in the nineteenth century domestic spaces:

> When the hysterical woman became sick, she no longer played the role of the self-sacrificing daughter or wife. . . she demanded service and attention from others. The families of hysterics found themselves reorganized around the patient,

> constantly nursed, indulged with special delicacies, and excused from ordinary duties. (133)

Earlier when Sylvia could walk, she had been acting out of her submissiveness to her marriage and "societal expectations" of the 1930s' Jewish-American living (Furst 136). Post her paralysis, she appears to be deriving "secondary gain" from her situation (130), along with the "solicitous attention from various quarters" (130). Showalter views the various symptoms of "hysteria", "depression, illness, withdrawal, and complaint" as women's protest in a male-formatted social structure, even though it has always been far less effective than any mutiny or upheaval in human history (*Malady* 65).

Since hysteria is "a cultural symptom of anxiety and stress", originating from struggles that are both "genuine and universal" (Showalter, *Hystories* 9), a female hysteric's "paralysis" or any other bodily symptom such as "mutism" or "spasmodic seizures" (54) must be viewed as "bodily metaphors" revolting against the "hyperfemininity" forced on her by her culture and society (55). Showalter also believes that it is essential to understand the signs of hysteria as "a form of expression, a body language for people who otherwise might not be able to speak or even to admit what they feel" (7) as it makes up for their "lack of a public voice to articulate their economic and sexual oppression" (54). Therefore, the answer to Hyman's initial puzzlement, "we have a strong, healthy woman who has no physical ailment, and suddenly can't stand on her legs. Why?" (*CP* 328), can be only found in the norms of patriarchy and traditional gender roles that render women suppressed and voiceless.

On the whole, *Broken Glass* "conjoins illness, gender, marriage, racism, and war while giving voice to a woman whose life has long been an exercise in silence" (Egerton, "Sick"162). It is a "critique of the institution of marriage" (Sharma 119), commenting sharply on how the society persecutes women through way of imposing conventional duties on them. Sylvia's paralysed legs speak of her "inner, unconscious perception" of her actual situation in life, reflecting "where she stands", and also "where and what she literally cannot *stand*" (Furst 130). She naturally connects her sufferings to those of the German Jews whose houses are being ransacked and shops broken by the Nazi forces—their prime fault being born Jewish, and hers—being born a woman.[xx]

Being a Jewish-American woman unquestionably means "double otherness" for Sylvia Gellburg. The various biographical and historical details subtly supplied in the play are sufficient to highlight the oppression experienced by women in the early twentieth century. The Freudian "talking cure" employed by Hyman, gives an opportunity to the

audience to peep into the inner recesses of Sylvia's mind. In fact, even his conversations with Phillip and Harriet, throw light on all the probable reasons responsible for Sylvia's numbness.

> HYMAN: … Didn't you used to go to the beach?
> SYLVIA: Sure. But I never did anything like that.
> HYMAN: You must have been very shy.
> SYLVIA: I guess. But I had to look out for my sisters, being the eldest . . . (*CP* 350)

From childhood itself, Sylvia, being the eldest daughter of her immigrant family, had to take care of her younger siblings, which obstructed her free expression and adventures. "All her life she did nothing but love everybody", Harriet says emotionally to Dr. Hyman (344); Sylvia's sympathising family and neighbours fail to understand the real causes of her distress.

When Gellburg first met Sylvia, she worked as the head bookkeeper of a large firm, *Empire Steel*:

> HARRIET: . . . Twenty; just out of high school practically and she's head bookkeeper. According to my husband, God gave Sylvia all the brains and the rest of us the big feet! The reason they met was the company took out a mortgage and she had to explain all the accounts to Phillip—he used to say, "I fell in love with her figures!" (343)

Even though, Phillip "fell in love with her figures" (343), he asked her to be a full-time housewife once their son, Jerome, was born. Sylvia complied. Initially, it may have been Sylvia's "figures" that fascinated Phillip, but eventually, it is just her "figure" which keeps him hooked (Egerton, "Sick" 176).

Suffering a sexual and conversational deficiency in her life with Phillip, Sylvia is quite naturally drawn to her doctor, and since the treatment procedure adopted by Hyman is "talk therapy", the intellectually vibrant housewife is seen looking forward to these meetings with her physician. She finds in him a confidante; ". . . I loved it! I've always enjoyed . . . you know, people depending on me" (*CP* 351), she tells Hyman about her happy life as a businesswoman.

Deprived of the various professional accomplishments that she loved so much, now Sylvia stays alone in the house as Phillip works long hours and their son, Jerome, is away too. The young boy serves at West Point, which makes his Jewish father very proud while his mother chooses to remain indifferent to his achievements within the army. It is quite apparent that Sylvia had no say even in the decision regarding her son's career: "I'll never

get used to it. Who goes in the army? Men who can't do anything else" (337), she says to Phillip, unable to feel any excitement at seeing her son's letter sent from his army unit.

Despite her well-informed and capable personality, Sylvia has been forced to live as a trophy-wife to Phillip. Even her intelligence is viewed mostly as a masculine attribute by the people around her:

> HYMAN (*encouragingly, as he sees Gellburg's small tension*): I found her a remarkably well informed woman. Especially for this neighborhood.
> GELLBURG (*a pridefully approving nod; relieved that he can speak of her positively*)*:* That's practically why we got together in the first place. I don't exaggerate, if Sylvia was a man she could have run the Federal Reserve. You could talk to Sylvia like you talk to a man. (326)

Sylvia's anguish related to her missed educational opportunities is openly revealed in her reaction to her nephew's rejection of higher education: "you have got a brilliant boy! My God . . . If I'd had a chance to go to college I'd have had a whole different life, you can't let this happen" (335), she says furiously to Harriet. In those times, even if women received education, higher/ university education was mostly limited to boys[xxi].

This discrimination against women could be seen even in the religious practices of Judaism. After immigration to America, the task of cultural and religious preservation became more female-dominated as men got busier with professional lives; the "cultural reproduction of Judaism" mostly remained confined to domestic spaces (Baumel 161). [xxii] In the professional world also, despite their education and active participation in social organisations and functions, women had to make do with a subservient position in the society. [xxiii]

Feminist writer, Charlotte Perkins Gilman draws attention to how from childhood itself, it is ingrained in women that they do not really have to earn for themselves, which is why "young boys plan for what they will achieve and attain" while "young girls plan for whom they will achieve and attain" (86-7). June Sochen writes that in the early twentieth century immigrant community, the dream of America did not weave very well with the dreams and ambitions of Jewish parents who wanted to protect their daughters against the secular Christian environment of the country that could corrupt their cultural values (2). It was common for Jewish mothers to work hard to save tuition for their sons' college education; the aspiring Jewish daughters picked odd jobs and secretly saved for their own college education (2). [xxiv] A majority of women kept joining as factory workers and were constantly replaced by other younger females (14); marriage was thus posited as women's

chief goal. They would return to the workforce only if they were widowed or there was any other tragedy in the family that required them to earn for themselves.

Even those Jewish women who shouldered the weight of working in their husband's retail businesses were influenced by their cultural view that their responsibilities as women were first to their home and children. These women "formed auxiliaries to the men's benevolent societies" and made peace with their roles as "followers, not leaders; helpmates, not initiators" (6); few could break the mould. [xxv]

In a scenario where a woman's chances of employment were mostly conditioned by her "ethnicity, marital status, gender, and class" (Srigley 70), Sylvia Gellburg had a secure and respectable job as the head bookkeeper of a large firm. As specified in the play, Sylvia was a businesswoman until she attained motherhood. Most feminist critics such as Shulamith Firestone, believe that women's oppression primarily originates from their "childbearing and childrearing" duties and choices (72) with their reproductive biology being chiefly responsible for their state of "continued oppression" (73). According to de Beauvoir, for centuries altogether, men have successfully utilized this biological advantage (difference) to assume the status of superior subjects, relegating women to the status of the "other". The "bliss of motherhood" is a dream given to a young girl by her society; she is told that the various struggles of her life as an inferior subject, are justified in exchange of this precious gift of procreation (de Beauvoir, *Second Sex* 473). Since maternal duties require the mother to devote all her energies to the child, she is hardly left with any for her own growth and development (Gilman.C 17). In the nomadic times, man attained this superiority, by assuming the role of the defender of the moving clan while women consumed themselves in childbearing, rearing, and other tasks around the hearth.

As the play moves forward, Hyman's diagnosis, at least to the level of the Gellburgs' being sexually deficient, comes to be true. The doctor, both attracted to Sylvia and curious about her case, gets her to reveal some of the most intimate details of her life by acting as a reassuring friend: "you're unhappy, not foolish" (*CP* 367), he tells her soothingly. Sylvia is thus encouraged to talk both about the sterility of her marriage and her fear of Phillip. She confides in him that she and Phillip "haven't had relations for almost twenty years" as after Jerome was born, Phillip "just couldn't anymore" (368). At the same time, she exposes her guilt for having hurt Phillip in the past: when this sexual inadequacy was still fresh, Sylvia, in whatever little capacity she possessed, did try working at the problem by discussing it with her father who took Phillip aside and tried suggesting him a

doctor. She finally managed to take Phillip to a rabbi, only to hurt his "male ego" as a result.

Sylvia's eyes betray to Hyman her fear of her husband: "Phillip can hit, you know" (369), she says worrying about his professional problems with Mr.Case. She knows Phillip can hit because she has herself taken his beatings in the past; not only sexually repressed, Sylvia Gellburg has also been a victim of an acute form of domestic violence in her marriage. Her family and neighbours have been well aware of her husband's misbehaviour with her. Harriet tells Hyman that on one occasion, Phillip threw her (Sylvia) "up the stairs" (345) for the crime of "laughing" along with others (mostly family, cousins and close friends), at a new year's party. On another occasion, she was slapped with a steak that according to Phillip was "overdone" (344).

The actual take of Sylvia's family and her society in relation to her marital misery is reflected in Harriet's reaction when Hyman asks her if the Gellburgs ever tried separating: "oh God no! Why should they? He's a wonderful provider. There's no Depression for Phillip, you know" (343). Harriet also tells Hyman that once when their marriage came to the verge of separation, Sylvia's mother patched them up; "it would kill our mother, she worships Phillip, she'd never outlive it" (343-4), she says. Mothers traditionally prepare their girls for marriage by teaching them not only home skills, but also how to be submissive within the marriage arrangement. Commenting on the mother-child relationship, de Beauvoir says that in her son, a woman looks for a god, a superior, but in her daughter, she sees her own "double" (*Second Sex* 496). Being both "overweeningly affectionate and hostile" towards her female child, the mother inadvertently "saddles" her daughter with her own "destiny" (285).

Forced to "keep the house" for all these years (*CP* 373), Sylvia is filled with regret and sadness now; her paralysis helps her see her entire life in retrospect. Now she questions her role in her house and society; in a particularly intense moment in the play, after Phillip's heart-stroke, Sylvia tells her husband, "I have been tip-toeing around my life for thirty years and I'm not going to pretend—I hate it all now. Everything I did is stupid and ridiculous. I can't find myself in my life" (385). She begins to weep and hit her feet.

A caged bird, Sylvia is unable to free herself of this unremitting suppression. In the 1930s, most well-read and sharp women like Sylvia could only fail to see the "emergency" of their personal situation even if they were sensitive enough to keep track of other threats such as the Nazis (371). Since *Broken Glass* is a later play by Miller produced in the 1990s, the modern audience is forced to wonder: 'why can't Sylvia divorce Phillip?' and 'why

can't she lead an independent life?'. Miller himself admitted that the mores of the then American society were such that Sylvia could not take an independent route for herself; her "amenable personality" and the dominance of her mother on all her decisions, are some other reasons for Sylvia's inaction (Griffin 186). A divorce in those times was not only considered to be against social contracts but also a sign of pathology (Bigsby, *Critical* 392) and more so, if it was a woman walking out on a man. Sylvia must stay a Gellburg, and thus paralysed; her paralysis is thus both "real" and "metaphorical" (Griffin 186).

Phillip Gellburg, a male stereotype in the play, being a "provider" (*CP* 343), believes that it is only Sylvia's duty to keep the house and wait for him with freshly cooked food laid out perfectly on the table, every day. "You know, like I have to do a lot of the cooking now, and tending to my laundry and so on . . . I even shop for groceries and the butcher . . . and change the sheets . . ." (331), Phillip says complainingly to Hyman. Guilty of having supressed Sylvia for over thirty years now, the husband suspects his paralysed wife of feigning illness to engage him in "menial" jobs of the household. He evidently feels "feminized by domestic responsibility" (Egerton, "Sick" 179).

> GELLBURG: I was late last night—I had to be in Jersey all afternoon, a problem we have there—she was sound asleep. So I made myself some spaghetti. Usually, she puts something out for me.
> HYMAN: She has no problem cooking.
> GELLBURG: I told you—she gets around the kitchen fine in the wheelchair. Flora shops in the morning—that's the maid. Although I am beginning to wonder if Sylvia gets out and walks around when I leave the house. (*CP* 355-6)

Completely aware of how and when he began causing damage to Sylvia's personality, Phillip can now be seen rummaging for a quick fix to his situation; he wants his wife to be active and busy. He proposes to buy her a new car and teach her to drive; ironically, the man who restricted her mobility, now wishes to gift her independence:

> GELLBURG: . . . I am thinking about a Dodge.
> HYLVIA: A Dodge?
> GELLBURG: I want you to teach you to drive. So you can go where you like, visit your mother in the afternoon. —I want you to be happy, Sylvia. (338)

Sylvia's attractive looks, intelligence, business acumen, social joviality, and the respect and love she receives from family and neighbours alike, almost everything about her, makes Phillip feel depreciated in direct comparison to herself. Her ambition and love for business makes him feel "emasculated" (Egerton, "Sick" 177) as he cannot bear that his

wife wanted a professional life and not more children with him. [xxvi] He hated every effort she made to bring in some "equilibrium in the marriage" (177).

Even though Sylvia simply asserted her rights by not choosing to have any more children after Jerome, Phillip feels a rage against her independent decision-making. de Beauvoir proposes that society must recognize a woman's human right to decline motherhood and assent feminine sexuality detached from the function of procreation. Contraception is a significant feature in recognizing a woman's right to control her own body, desires, and parental instincts (*Second Sex* 380); she must have the right to "undertake her maternities in freedom (474)."

Phillip Gellburg does not appreciate such independence in Sylvia. Even in the case of his sexual inability, he chooses to shift the blame to her by saying, "you didn't want me to be the man here" (*CP* 374). He strongly feels that Sylvia's refusal to have more children after Jerome, dried him up. Despite his love and passion for Sylvia, he is helpless in the face of her relative grandness when placed next to him. Unable to "perform conversationally and sexually" (Tomasch 77), Gellburg wants to limit Sylvia's exposure to other people (men). As the Nazi of her nightmares, who she sees cutting her breasts, Phillip appears to be amputating her "sexuality to protect his own" (82). He is quick to observe the sexual charge between Hyman and his wife, which prompts him to do away with the *"healthy, rather handsome*" doctor altogether (*CP* 323), much used to taking all important decisions for Sylvia. But now, Sylvia, having reached the brim of frustrations and humiliations, refuses to take orders:

> GELLBURG: Why does it have to be him?
> SYLVIA: Because I can talk to him! I want him. *An outburst*: And I don't want to discuss it again!
> GELLBURG: Well we'll see.
> SYLVIA: We will not see!
> GELLBURG: What's this tone of voice?
> SYLVIA, (*trembling out of control*): It's a Jewish woman's tone of voice. (372)

More than being "a Jewish woman's tone of voice", it is a woman's, a revolting individual's tone of voice—it is the voice of a human being who is finally gathering some courage against life-long domination. Sylvia's mysterious paralysis certainly seems to have brought a new articulation and assertiveness to her personality.

Pained at seeing the apparent destruction of his marriage with Sylvia, Phillip says to Hyman, "how could everything turn out to be the opposite—I made my son in this bed and now I am dying in it…" (380). He thinks only he "made" his son, and Sylvia just gave

birth to him. Despite the realisation of his mistakes after his stroke, Phillip feels Sylvia "has no right to be so frightened" of him or the Nazis (382). His sexual insecurities also remain intact as he confronts them directly in front of Hyman, by telling him that since he started coming to their house, Sylvia began looking at Phillip as "a miserable piece of shit!" (383).

As can easily be observed, the Hymans, as a modern couple with openness and energy, act as foils to the sick, pale, and paralysed Gellburgs in the play—they are the "diametric opposite" of the Gellburgs (Furst 140). Hyman's marriage with a *shiksa* instead of a Jewish woman, highlights his modernity for the times he lived in. As highlighted earlier, intermarriage was not much accepted or encouraged in those times. Even though Hyman appears capable of providing Sylvia the solace and companionship she couldn't find in her husband and family, he is incompetent to understand the underlying issues related to her hysterical numbness. He sees her sexual suppression and "undue" fear of the Germans as her main troubles; himself a product of the "manhood" of those times, Hyman fails to recognize that it is traditional gender roles that have crushed Sylvia's identity. He encouragingly tells Sylvia, "you're a very attractive woman, don't you know that?" (*CP* 349), and "… I haven't been this moved by a woman in a very long time" (350). He fails to point at Sylvia's lack of purpose in life as the main cause of her illness.

Likewise, as opposed to a numbed and paralysed wheelchair confined Sylvia, the *"lusty, energetic"* Margaret Hyman (321) offers a stark reverse in the play, but a deeper analysis of the two women is required to understand their likenesses despite their apparent divergences. Both women well-read and educated, have the potential to be professionally and socially active but still, both live lives of subservience and inequality. The correspondence between the two is also slightly hinted at by Hyman himself:

> HYMAN: Good. Your wife has a lot of courage, I admire that kind of woman. My wife is similar; I like the type.
> GELLBURG: What type you mean?
> HYMAN: You know-vigorous. I mean mentally and . . . you know, just generally. Moxie.
> GELLBURG: Oh. (324)

Katherine Egerton draws attention to how Hyman senses Gellburg's discomfort and skips saying the next predictable word, "physically" by choosing to say "just generally" instead ("Sick"184). Through her open way of conversation and overall energy, Margaret may offer a contrast to Sylvia but still, the *shiksa* wife is in no better condition than the Jewish wife in the story. She understands why Hyman wants to jump out of his professional

domain for Sylvia; indeed, her suspicions hold truth because there is certainly a prominent sexual attraction and intimacy between the doctor and patient.

Whenever Margaret begins addressing the underlying problems of their marriage, Hyman somehow manages to sway her with his sexual charms, suppressing his wife's logical reasoning and independent thought in a way. "We find an island and we strip and go riding on this white horse . . ." (*CP* 333), is how he stops her from speaking of her suspicions and apprehensions. Margaret is a sexually vigorous asset to her husband, with whom he needs to fantasize about sharks and white horses, to forget about the everyday practical and serious concerns of life. People indeed "overestimate the wisdom of physicians" (324); Hyman exemplifies what he says to Phillip at the beginning of the play.

The physician's wife is neither able to detach herself from him nor is she able to control his sexual adventures completely. Both sexually and professionally, Margaret is a subservient to Hyman; "we met in Mount Sinai when he was interning" (321), she tells Phillip when he asks her if she works as Hyman's nurse. In fact, Margaret works as both Hyman's nurse and receptionist, which appears to be quite a convenient arrangement for the husband; in this way, Margaret can not only take care of the household (Hyman's clinic is attached to their house) but also engage her husband's patients when the physician is away, riding his horse or gone somewhere to attend to other patients who, if attractive, can also be flirted with. Sylvia keeps the house because her husband would like her to and Margaret keeps both the house and the clinic because that is what the husband prefers.

How Hyman sees his wife is also prominently reflected in how he explains his meeting and relationship with her: "we were thrown together when I was interning, and we got very close, and . . . well she was a good partner, she helped me, and still does. And I loved her" (381). "Love" that comes last in his description seems small in front of the "help" provided by an unpaid, full-time servant. Jessie Bernard in her book, *The Future of Marriage* (1972), argues that the restrictions imposed on women by traditional marriage, contribute to their unhappiness and ill health, causing "profound discontinuities" and "genuine emotional health hazards" (37).

Married to Hyman, Margaret is forced to bury both her desire to live in a bigger town and her potential which she never really got a chance to explore. Singing praises of her husband's value as a physician, she says to Phillip, "if he only had the ambition, but he always wanted a neighbourhood practice. Why, I don't know—we never invite anybody, we never go out, all our friends are in Manhattan. But it's his nature, you can't fight a person's nature" (*CP* 323). Margaret Hyman reminds the audience of Patricia Hamilton,

the clinically depressed woman of *The Last Yankee*, but while Margaret has somehow made peace with her situation, Patricia keeps fighting her carpenter-husband for his inability to make more money or provide sufficiently for their large family of seven children.

Brokenness is deeply ingrained in the marriages portrayed in the play but in both marriages, it is women who appear more broken, suppressed, and shattered; one woman victimised by her husband's sexual inability—other by her husband's potency (Abbotson, *Student* 92).

Since little girls in most societies across the globe learn right from their early childhood that it is men who "run the world" (de Beauvoir, *Second Sex* 293), women have been forced to accept their subsidiary role in every sphere. The world was and continues to be predominantly male-formatted; women are indeed just "auxiliaries" to the main action in all domains (Miller, *Conversations-Roudane* 370). Therefore, Sylvia's standing on her feet at the end of the play, can be viewed as a woman's rise against male oppression (Sharma 135); having stood behind a "glass wall of static domesticity", she is both likely to be freed and wounded in the end when the wall finally breaks (Egerton, "Sick" 156).

Patriarchy builds a master-slave relationship between men and women, rendering women's identity crippled. Arthur Miller's female characters in the selected plays appear tormented in a predominantly male world; he shows them as fragile creatures fighting clinical depression, and surviving on anti-depressants while attempting to cope with irreparable emotional damage. The ever-increasing number of female patients at American mental institutions is just an indication of the inadequacies of this society. *Women and Depression*, edited by Iffat Hussain, is an assemblage of papers and essays by different authors, who offer insights into the prevalence of clinical depression among women. In one such essay, Carolyn Quadrio states that "in most parts of the world, the oppression and marginalization of women is a fact of life" (156); in developed nations such as America, the gender gap is reducing but still most women do not feel equal with their male counterparts (156). It is always women who bear maximum "abuse and trauma" (156) and therefore, they are evidently more prone to clinical depression.

In Miller's portrayal, the society's mores since the 1930s haven't changed much; the 1990s' society as depicted in *The Last Yankee* strongly reflects this fact. The conversation between the depressives' husbands, Frick and Leroy, points towards how women's actual problem still remains unrecognized:

FRICK: Is that all! I had an idea it had something to do with growing old . . .
LEROY: I don't think so. My wife is still—I wouldn't say a ravishing beauty, but she's still . . . a pretty winsome woman. They're usually sick a long time before you realize it, you know. I just never realized it.
FRICK: Mine never showed any signs at all. Just a nice, quiet kind of a woman. Always slept well . . .
LEROY: Well mine sleeps well too.
FRICK: Really?
LEROY: Lot of them love to sleep. I found that out. She'd take naps every afternoon. Longer and longer. (*CP* 285)

Both Patricia and Karen are modern American housewives suffering from clinical depression. The men who discuss their condition are certainly not able to see it from a feminist point of view. Miller indirectly points out how women's illness has nothing to do with them being rich or poor, young or old, parenting or childless. Despite his natural understanding and patience, even Leroy Hamilton fails to see how Patricia's life has been wasted because she was confined to the household, rearing seven children and daydreaming about having more money and luxuries while Leroy went to work and found joy and meaning in woodcraft and banjo lessons.

Compared to Leroy, Frick's understanding of his wife's situation is even poorer. In fact, there is an uncanny likeness between Phillip Gellburg and John Frick: with Karen's sickness, even Frick feels bad that he must do all the shopping himself now as his wife wouldn't step out of the house. "Well one thing came out of it—I finally learned how to make coffee. And mine is better than hers was. It's an awful sensation, though—coming home and there's nobody there" (286); John Frick's comments on his wife's illness are plain insensitive, sexist, and cruel. The man is clearly habituated to being welcomed at home after a tiring day at work. Both Phillip Gellburg and John Frick shift blames, reluctant to accept truth and responsibility; Frick feels that Karen fears the Negroes (and not him) and Gellburg blames the German Jews for Sylvia's condition. To the money-obsessed Frick, "it's a mystery—a woman with everything she could possibly want . . . she lost all her optimism" (287).

Like Gellburg, even Frick sees Karen's illness as a ploy against himself. He says to Patricia that Karen is favouring herself through her sickness; "I mean the woman has everything, what right has she got to start shooting blanks like that?" (311), he says. Frick feels bad thinking of those times when he would come home from work and Karen would listen to him; those talks about the stock market, real estate, and his various business deals, in which Karen was just a listener and not a participant, are happy memories of Frick's

married life. But Karen does not respond anymore; therefore, the ageing wife who lies numb in the house, only looks like a bad investment now. Frick wants her to step out of the house more often (reminding us of Phillip's idea of buying his wife a new car and teaching her to drive), but Karen doesn't know where she should go now.

Instead of being supportive like Leroy, Frick makes Karen feel bad about her illness, which is evident in Karen's guilt about her depression. He feels that for Karen to stand in one place without moving for half an hour is a sign of her weakness and therefore, easily dismisses her by tagging her not "normal". In fact, he is not only ashamed of her illness but her hobbies too:

> FRICK: . . . But don't tell me you think it's normal for a woman her age to be getting out of bed two, three in the morning and start practicing.
> PATRICIA: Well maybe she's trying to get you interested in it. Are you?
> FRICK: In tap dancing? Truthfully, no.
> PATRICIA: Well there you go . . .
> FRICK: Well we've got a lot of new competition in our fuel-oil business.
> PATRICIA: Fuel oil!
> FRICK: I've got seven trucks on the road that I've got to keep busy . . .
> PATRICIA: Well there you go, maybe that's why your wife is in here. (312-3)

Even though he gets Karen's tap-dancing costume to the hospital, John Frick admits that he finds it "kinda silly at her age" (311); when Karen finally begins to dance, his embarrassment is out in the open. The hint of sensuousness in Karen's dance gets unbearable for her husband. She stands there "perfectly still, staring at nothing" (315) when in a fit of anger, Frick leaves her performance midway. Having no life or ambitions of her own and living as a slave to her husband, are realities of Karen's life that have crippled her identity. She cannot even continue with her performance after her husband leaves. Karen is used to living life for him, which explains why, despite her discomfort, she has been accompanying Frick to hunting trips; even though Karen cannot stand the sight of dead animals (294).

There is an indirect hint thrown in the play through what Dr. Rockwell says about women's depression to Karen, which she repeats to Patricia: "it's quite common when a woman is home alone all day" (299). Likewise, Patricia also admits that it is in the afternoons when she is home alone and everybody is out at work or at school that she thinks too much and gets depressed (303). It is important to see these women's clinical depression in relation to fixed gender roles and environments, where women must only engage in household chores—keep the house and raise children while men go out to work and earn a

living for everyone. These women's education and careers are nowhere in discussion in the play. With their lives confined only to their husbands and homes, their involvement with the world outside seems sparse—contributing massively to their depression.

Simone de Beauvoir explains this problem by terming it as "the torment of Sisyphus." (*Second Sex* 438). By utilising the parable of Sisyphus [xxvii], de Beauvoir explains how women's domestic labour is analogous to the futility and drudgery of Sisyphus's exertion. Domestic labour, de Beauvoir argues fails to add anything to the woman:

> Few tasks are more similar to the torment of Sisyphus than those of the housewife; day after day, one must wash dishes, dust furniture, mend clothes that will be dirty, dusty, and torn again . . .. The housewife wears herself out running on the spot; she does nothing; she only perpetuates the present; she never gains the sense that she is conquering a positive Good, but struggles indefinitely against Evil. (438)

Given the fact that Patricia is far more materially ambitious than her husband, her angst and depression are also related to her being financially dependent on a man who refuses to make more money. Had Patricia been an independent working woman, if not all, many conflicts between herself and Leroy would not have existed at all. Also, Patricia is a mother to seven children; these many pregnancies in a lower income household must have taken a toll on the woman while Leroy has always found ways to feel happy through wood craft and music. "The burdens that come with maternity vary greatly depending on customs: they are overwhelming if numerous pregnancies are imposed on the woman and if she must feed and raise her children without help" (de Beauvoir, *Second Sex* 79-80). Patricia's sickness has certainly reversed the situation in her household; it is now Leroy and their seven kids who take responsibility for all household chores while Patricia is in a mental institution. In fact, the same reversal can be seen in both Karen's and Sylvia's cases as well.

Feminist writer, Betty Friedan, criticizes the American Dream that assumes women to be only aspiring for conventional gender roles. The idea of a traditional family where women stay at home and men go to work, traps women in a "gilded" but lethal cage, in which they became unpaid domestic laborers, cut off from meaningful work and intellectual stimulation. Friedan highlights how women's problems are most misunderstood in the society, which is why everything but the "problem" is tagged a problem:

> The only problems now are those that might disturb her adjustment as a housewife. So career is a problem, education is a problem, political interest, even the very admission of women's intelligence and individuality is a problem. And finally there is the problem that has no name, a vague undefined wish for "something more" than washing dishes, ironing, punishing and praising the children. In the women's

> magazines, it is solved either by dyeing one's hair blonde or by having another baby. (*Feminine Mystique* 44)

The Ride Down Mt. Morgan also essays the misery of modern American women as the two female characters in the play are evidently exploited at the hands of a bigamist husband. Lyman's understanding of his two wives is confined to his twin animal hungers for food and sex:

> LYMAN: . . . but you're a lady, Theodora; the delicate sculpture of your noble eye, your girlish faith in me and your disillusion; your idealism and your unadmitted greed for wealth; the awkward tenderness of your wooden fingers, your incurably Protestant cooking; your savoir-faire and your sexual inexperience; your sensible shoes and devoted motherhood, your intolerant former radicalism and stalwart love of country now—your Theodorism! Who can ever take your place! (*CP* 228)

Theo, the conservative older first wife of Lyman's, grew up in a house where she was expected to conform to various conventional rules and regulations set for her by her Episcopalian family. In the play, we see her going from her balanced, idealistic self to a woman who drops her skirt in the middle of a hospital where her husband lies wrapped in casts and bandages. In the selected plays, the female characters demonstrate their rebellion through physical acts and symptoms: while Sylvia's emotional paralysis is reflected through her numbed legs and Patricia and Karen's anguish and isolation through their clinical depression, Theodora's rebellion is asserted through a rather embarrassing act of dropping her skirt in front of everyone at a public place. It is a reflection of her anguish against her husband's immoral actions; she feels like a used doll. Shocked at Lyman's misdeeds, Theo becomes more relaxed with herself and her position—even offering to share Lyman though Bessie, her daughter, finally coaxes her to go home alone. She certainly does not wish to continue being a "lady" forever.

The greatest evidence of Theo's low self-esteem lies in her admittance that she always knew what Lyman had been doing in their marriage—cheating her through and through. When Tom questions her about why could not she leave him, she says "What would I do with myself alone?" (240). In Theodora's dilemma is embodied the condition of a modern, educated American woman, who, despite her potential, chooses to be a "homemaker" instead of finding an identity of her own. But then, Lyman's second wife, Leah, despite her professional life and financial independence, appears as tormented as Theo.

Analysing *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*, it may be easily concluded that Theo and Leah are both nothing but minor characters in the larger drama created by Lyman Felt (Bigsby, *Critical* 367). The apparent fight and verbal spat between his two wives over the title of "Mrs. Felt" in the hospital lobby reflect both feminine insecurity and the miserable condition of women in contemporary America (Sharma 88).

Despite all these years of double-dealing and deceit with these two women, Lyman still feels that he made "his" women very happy by providing them with the best of things. He really believes that Leah's life would have been nothing but a story full of "heartless condoms" had he not met her and made her his wife (*CP* 273).

In Lyman's imagination, his two wives appear to be "on elevated platforms like two stone deities, donning "kitchen aprons" and "wifely ribbons tying up their hair" (241); he happily imagines Leah and Theo compare their culinary skills and discuss about how perfectly to portion their husband between themselves. Lyman's imagination symbolizes his general perception of women. In its entirety, the play depicts the male view of women in the society: Theo is the conservative version men need for running the family with stability and values, and Leah, the modern business woman needed for experiencing sexual adventures and fantasies.

de Beauvoir believes that women cannot attain emancipation unless they participate in economic production on a large social scale and are only "incidentally" involved in domestic chores (*Second Sex* 80-1). Women in modern America are involved in the professional domain, but, this participation only seems to be exerting doubled pressures on them. Even when they are seen at business suits in boardroom meetings, women are first seen only as objects. Even Lyman's ambitious wife, Leah, appears in his imagination adorning "wifely ribbons" (*CP* 241), indicating the fact that despite Leah's career and business acumen, Lyman sees her only as a traditional woman discussing "wifely" duties. Apparently, both Leah and Lyman had first met through work; their initial conversation hints at Lyman's sexual perversion and patriarchal attitude of looking at women:

> LEAH: . . . Incidentally, have you been listening to me?
> LYMAN: Yes, but my attention keeps wandering toward a warm and furry place ... *She laughs, delighted . . .*
> LYMAN: How happy I am! *Sniffs his hands . . ..* Sitting in Elmira in the sun with you, and your scent still on my hands! God! —all the different ways there are to try to be real! (230)

The play thus displays how both kinds of women are equally exploited in male hands: they are both forced to continue playing these roles of subservience to keep the patriarch satisfied (Sharma 88). Part of a "libidinal" economy and culture, Lyman Felt treats women as nothing but consumer goods to be used up and relished (Sharma 55). His character in the play is representative of "male response" to an extremely consumerist and materialistic American society (85).

> LYMAN: A man is a fourteen-room house—in the bedroom he's asleep with his intelligent wife, in the living room he's rolling around with some bare-ass girl, in the library he's paying his taxes, in the yard he's raising tomatoes, and in the cellar he's making a bomb to blow it all up. (*CP* 247)

Lyman's disdain for women is closely linked with the reprimands he received from his father as a young boy: the elder Felt who haunts his dreams and imagination all the time, kept warning his son against women, saying, "God only makes them for one thing, obey God" (*CP* 205). Even when Lyman talks to Nurse Logan about Leah, his language and description of his feelings for her gives one a flavour of his obscenity and vulgarity.

> LYMAN: She had a fantastic smell; Leah smelled like a ripe, pink, slightly musty cantaloupe . . .. And her smile-when she showed her teeth her clothes seemed to drop off. We had some prehistoric kind of connection—! swear, if a hundred women walked past me on a sidewalk I could pick out the clack of her heels. I even loved lying in bed listening to the quiet splash of her bath water. And of course slipping into her soft cathedral . . . (244)

According to de Beauvoir, objectification of women is integral to the functioning of a capitalistic society. Women's clothes, their ornaments and make-up accentuate their image as "object", thereby limiting opportunities for them. The high heels and tight skirts that they wear certainly limit their movement and active participation (*Second Sex* 506).

In *Mr Peters' Connections,* Cathy May's naked body is compared to a "party gown" (*CP* 403). She is a woman known more for her body than her mind (Abbotson, *Critical* 250); Cathy first appears in the play in high heels, adorning nothing but nakedness. She is the quintessence of male sexual desire, reflecting how she is viewed by the men around her. Mr. Peters gets excited at the memory of her body while he waits for his wife at the dilapidated night club.

While Calvin's remarks about her are clearly objectifying and demeaning, her husband, Larry Tedesco, is also seen humiliating her: he reprimands her for not wearing panties. His misbehaviour reaches its peak when he tries to expose her lack of panties to

the people present at the night club. Larry violently kisses Cathy May and calls Peters to come close to her chest to listen to her heartbeat as she is kissed in this fashion:

> LARRY: This is shopping? Where's the stuff, left it on the counter again? *Feels her for panties.* And where's your underwear? *To Peters.* And this woman votes! Walks around bareass on New York streets? Bends over in the fruit market to test tomatoes in front of Koreans? —a married woman? . . . Take her to a counselor and I'm behind her on the stairs and she's wearing no panties! . . . Where's your underwear? You belong to me or not? . . . Look, everybody! *He is trying to spread her legs apart* . . .. How can this belong to anybody! . . . (*CP* 434-5)

In *Finishing the Picture*, Kitty is also viewed in a similar fashion. Both Kitty and Cathy are muted women in these plays; Cathy has four lines while Kitty has just one line in one version, and none in the other. In depriving these women of dialogue, Miller creatively shows the audience the actual state of our society. How and what these females think is of no interest to the men around them; both Kitty and Cathy are shown to be suffering immobility in a predominantly male world.

Case, Kitty's cameraman, says, "ass stops traffic every time, and she's got it" (516). To Case, Kitty is just a girl who once modelled underwear; so, she should be of use as a sex-icon on screen or get back to doing useless business. Most people around Kitty relate her to a dream, to a vision, to a sex symbol, but fail to respect her as an individual or even as an actor. Case says of Kitty that god gave her only a "darling face" and a "spectacular ass" (522); he feels that her lies in her body and not in what she thinks or does. Kitty is thought to be a beautiful ensemble of flesh and bones that has no business thinking thoughts. Even when the very understanding and sensitive Philip Ochsner speaks to Kitty, he tells her that he often wonders, "how does a woman who looks like that get so depressed?" (539). Ochsner thus presents to us a very hollow male view of looking at women: if they are beautiful and sexually desirable, they must not be depressed or sad.

In *Resurrection Blues*, the fascination attached to the female body is visible in the way Felix speaks to Emily Shapiro, the modern American woman, who happens to be a skilled cinematographer in the play:

> EMILY: —I must say your face seems softer than when we met.
> FELIX: Possibly because something grips my imagination as we converse.
> EMILY: Grips your imagination!
> FELIX: Your body. —I beg you to forgive my frankness, it's because I am sure, Emily, that I could . . . how shall I say . . . function with you. (481)

Right from the moment Felix sees Emily, she stops being an individual to him: it is only her attractive appearance that remains the focus of Felix's attention and thought. Knowing his cousin's fixation with attractive women, Henri requests Emily to dissuade Felix from going ahead with Ralph's crucifixion. The dictator sees the end of his sexual problems in Emily; after just one sexual encounter with this new woman, Felix excitedly tells his niece, Jeanine, that Emily has opened his eyes.

Even though it can be considered as just one of the many forms of gender based discrimination in the society, sexual objectification leads to a "host of other oppressions women face, ranging from employment discrimination and sexual violence to the trivialization of women's work and accomplishments" (Frederickson & Tomi-Ann 174). It is indeed true that "the multiple ways of being female in a society" adversely affect women's "subjective experiences" and when these experiences hoard for years altogether, they "contribute to a subset of mental health risks" (U.Vindhya et al. 4084). The fact that worsens the whole scenario for women is that popular mass media such as television and films are often proliferated with their "sexualized images"; hence, "confrontations" with these depictions quite naturally becomes unescapable (Frederickson & Tomi-Ann 177). So strongly has this malaise "permeated our cultural milieu" that all women, irrespective of their age and social setup, find themselves in its grip (177). When women internalize this kind of objectification, they are bound to suffer its undesirable psychological outcomes.

As a playwright, Arthur Miller has been much criticised for giving rather insignificant roles to women in his plays. In her book, *In the Shadows: Women in Arthur Miller's Plays,* Sangeeta Sharma states that "women" and "marginality" go hand in hand in the artistic sphere of Miller's writing (181) and that his works portray females as mere "caricatures" and not as "three dimensional" characters (183). In response to this allegation against the playwright and his art of dramatic characterisation, it may be stated that Miller's playwriting is predominantly based on what he sees around him, which may not always be a very happy picture to paint on stage. It is the world around him that he brings to stage, and this world is visibly unjust to women and racial groups—discrimination against women and ethnic groups is not new in the world. We must not forget that "the stage is a mirror that reflects cultural and social organization" (Dolan, 1992). The men and women of the selected plays must therefore be viewed as products of the times and social conditions in which these plays are set. It is not Miller who belittles women but the world. It is not his artistic sphere where the lacuna lies; it is in us that we need to trace the reasons for such portrayal on stage.

Another very important theme in Miller's selected plays is the alienation one feels as part of an economy that is capitalistic and thus cold-blooded. The portrayal in these plays highlights how "class" isolates and paralyzes men and women, irrespective of where they stand on the ladder. These plays demonstrate how even "class and status", just like "race" and "gender", are prominent pigeonholes numbing the modern American society.

However, Miller's dismissal or criticism of American capitalism is not new; it was certainly the personal experiences of his family during the Crash that instilled in him a clear understanding of how the economic policies of a country shape the fate of its men and women. America's focus on generating profits, with little attention to social values and sense of community, has been a recurrent theme in all of Miller's dramatic works. And it is a concern most explicitly addressed in his early plays written at the *University of Michigan* and also in his initial successes on Broadway such as *Death of a Salesman* and *All My Sons.*

Miller realised the "inherent danger" in capitalism and understood well that America's aggressive consumerist focus could actually reduce individual liberty to a "mere illusion" as it traps people in a vicious "cycle of false need and hope" (Abbotson, *Critical* 374). In *Timebends,* he writes that the Crash was "only incidentally a matter of money"; to him, it was rather the "moral catastrophe" of his nation, a point of time in American history when all its disguises and illusions came crashing down (115) and filled the streets with unemployed and homeless men, women, and children.

Karl Marx saw society as divided into two groups: the "bourgeoisie", who are the rich classes controlling the means of production and the "proletarians", who are the poor working classes. Marxists often claim that change can be brought only when the "proletarians" from the lower working classes of the society free themselves of the consumerist structure of capitalism (Barry 151). In *The Sane Society,* Erich Fromm, like Marx, points out how alienation is not primarily psychic by nature for its roots can be traced far back into human history; it's indeed the basic constitution of a "class society" that is responsible for alienation.

To his own admission, Miller appreciated what Marxism "claimed to offer" (*Timebends* 115), yet, he never completely recognised himself as a "Marxist"; however, he understood the need for a new system that could emphasise more on the oneness of individual and society. Perhaps Christopher Bigsby puts Miller's take on Marxism most aptly: the playwright "flirted" with Marxist ideas but since he was never completely "committed" to it, he never had to experience the disenchantment that many lived with

when the god failed (*Modern* 77). But the question that arises here is: is Marxism really dead? In Miller's dramatic focus and socialistic ideals, the main precepts of Marxism that he initially aligned with, appear to have continued till the end of his career. He may not be a "Marxist" but his commitment "to a vision of human solidarity" (77) is what we need to understand.

Death of a Salesman was conceptualised and written when the post-Depression struggles were very much fresh in the playwright's mind; it is often viewed as Miller's Marxist attack on the American society, in which Willy Loman struggled against the forces of capitalism. Terry Eagleton proposes that Marxist criticism is indeed the "path of our liberation from oppression" (35) for it frees us from class supremacy, from the philosophical fences that block our awareness of class domination. This kind of liberation begins with detecting the hegemonic element in our society, which is most certainly possible through an investigation of art. Since art works "are forms of perception, particular ways of seeing the world; and as such they have a relation to that dominant way of seeing the world which is the 'social mentality' or ideology of an age" (3), art is important to understand the society. Eagleton also believes that in order to comprehend and appreciate works of art, one is required to identify the relations of those works with their social background— connections which surface "not just in 'themes' and 'preoccupations,' but in style, rhythm, image, quality and . . . form" (6). Seeing the selected plays through a Marxist lens helps one understand the flaws that lie engraved in the American economic set-up that only divides people further.

However, even though the selected works do bear a very close relationship with the social and economic milieu in which they are conceived and set and depict the struggles between different economic classes, they are certainly more complex in both their content and structure. This is chiefly because the characters of these plays cannot simply be seen as flourishing "bourgeoisie" and struggling "proletarians", despite the fact that they are indeed representatives of these two classes. In fact, instead of just presenting only the struggles between the two classes, Miller chooses to place in front of his audience the collective dilemma of both classes—for in his dramatic sphere, they are both victims of a larger malicious scheme of their country, where both rich and poor are rendered helpless and numbed. The primary message that comes through Miller's narration is that "money is no guarantee" to human happiness and fulfilment. The capitalistic American mind-set and indulgence in material narcissism renders men and women victims of a culture of chase and despair.

Separating the selected later plays from Miller's earlier plays is the fact that in the former, there lies a near absence of economically backward characters. The Carbones of *A View from the Bridge* and the Lomans of *Death of a Salesman,* who represented the hard-working and careworn America, are nowhere to be seen here. Practically all characters in these plays, with a few exceptions such as Leroy Hamilton, are economically comfortable; and therefore, we must take note of how Miller portrays materially "successful" men and women in his plays as absolutely depressed and isolated (Abbotson, *Critical* 374). These plays are a mirror image of the modern society where people are comfortably rich and yet depressed and alienated—which the playwright shows us as the major downside of the American Dream. Also, these plays offer a very thoughtful demonstration of what Marxists would call "work alienation" or "alienation of labour".

In their three essays on the Marxist theory of "work alienation", Novack and Mandel simplify how Marx pointed out "alienation" as an integral part of labour in a capitalistic economy. According to Marx, "we project out of our own body" whatever we produce and the moment the product is ready, it becomes an alien to its own creator (Novack 16). Unlike the "idea" that actually created the product, the product is a mere stranger (16). Therefore, "labour", by its very nature, is alienating for human beings in a society where people are constantly separated from the fruits of their labour (16). Also, the same products that labour produced with their own efforts assume a "socially oppressive existence" in a commodity producing and promoting society (16). Yet another angle of Marxist theory of "work alienation" is that it not only alienates people from the means of sustenance but also consumes all the time they could have utilized for development of "self" (21). The "labour" is bound to sell its "time" to the employer.

In a society divided between "hostile classes of capitalists and wage workers", there is bound to be acute human crisis and dissatisfaction— "overproduction, depressions . . . recessions", to name a few hazards (22). When work no longer remains a way to express one's inner creativity, it becomes just another method to accomplish a goal— which is invariably confined to attaining more money or luxury (23).

According to Paul Blumberg, the subject of "work alienation" is essentially a "sub-theme" in Miller's drama, in which we see varied portrayals of man's disconnect from family, community, and himself (294). His plays successfully demonstrate the isolating character of labour in today's times. They are also unusual in the sense that characters in his stories spend too much time at work; when not at work, they talk about work and mostly bear the negative consequences of their involvement with work (295). His plays emphasise

upon the significance of work in determining the lives and character of the men and women he portrays (295).

Perhaps the one play among the selected, that clearly demonstrates the struggles between the capitalistic forces and the working classes, comprehensively addressing all Marxist concerns is *The Last Yankee*. In this play, Miller paints a very authentic picture of the modern American society that he sees slowly moving towards technology, leaving manual labour (embodied in the play as Leroy Hamilton) far behind. As is evident, Leroy's love for woodcraft is constantly let down by the financial mores of his culture, in which men such as John Frick, a representative of the upper class, control the means of production. While Frick sees in his "rags to riches" story his accomplishment of the American Dream, in Leroy's status as a carpenter, he sees the man's failure. This kind of class distinction that is based chiefly on financial gains is a natural outcome of a capitalist structure.

As highlighted in chapter 2, the initial conversation that Frick and Hamilton have in the hospital's waiting-room, gives us a clear picture of the clashes between these two classes of the society, wherein the poor constantly feels pressurized to upgrade themselves. In his love for crafting wood, Leroy finds satisfaction and yet, he struggles with feelings of alienation because what he creates is not his own. In fact, since it is the basic feature of such an economy to pay least to the actual creator or labour, there seems to be no hope for stepping out of this state (Novack 24). Leroy does his work with utmost dedication and honesty and yet he finds himself struggling to find decent wages for his family.

> 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? I mean you ever hear a parent going around saying—*mimes thumb pridefully tucked into suspenders*— "My son is a carpenter"? Do you? Do you ever hear people brag about a bricklayer? I don't know what you are but I'm only a dumb swamp Yankee, but . . . (*CP* 291)

Unlike Leroy, Frick is incapable of loving his work and is not loyal to any craft: he moves swiftly from a lumber to oil business for better margins, simply because he lives to chase "more". John Frick is exactly the selfish and greedy upper class that Hamilton is reluctant to associate with. Another feature of a competitive economy is that it renders people "prisoners of their trade" (Novack 25). To Frick, his identity is chiefly based on what business he does and how much profit he makes; his act of introducing himself as "Frick Lumber" reflects how he barters his identity for a better pitching of his economic status in front of others (*CP* 10). Ironically, he complains about the labour force charging

too much but he advices Leroy, “if they’ll pay it, grab it” (289), which is the same advice Leroy receives from Patricia also.

Through her marriage to Leroy, Patricia is certainly bound to the “poor” class status but she wishes desperately to be upgraded to the upper class for she lives in the illusion of rich people never being depressed. Patricia’s main conflict with Leroy is based on him not being a materially “successful” man while other “men with half his ability” ride around in “big expensive cars” (296). She tags her husband a failure because he would spend money on banjo lessons and not buy the family a new car (296); an old, second hand Chevy is certainly a badge of poverty for Patricia. She fails to see the joy Leroy derives from his craft and music; she cannot bear it when her husband is not able to pay the bills (309). On the other hand, Leroy accepts his relative poverty with honesty: “but I’m a carpenter—this is probably the way it’s been for carpenters since they built Noah’s ark”, he tells her (309).

Patricia’s overall outlook to life, including her interest in religion appears to be closely tied with her obsession with material signs of social status: “this minister I mentioned? . . . when he left his previous church they gave him a Pontiac Grand Am” (294), she says to Karen, mighty impressed with the man. Even her conversation with Karen remains mostly non-animated until she realizes that Karen is “rich”; which is when she gets “*quickly interested*” to listen more from the older depressive (297). To this woman, who bagged a beauty pageant at age nineteen, appearances evidently seem to matter most: she boasts about how she and Leroy made the “handsomest” couple in town (297) and also how her brothers looked so very magnificent with the “right looks and teeth”; always keeping her brothers and family above Leroy (300). Even though Patricia realizes the hollowness of her family’s ideals, she still fails to undo the materialistic values she grew up imbibing in a Swedish immigrant family. She feels enraged thinking that her husband could have actually “set the world on fire” but instead, he chooses to be isolated and poor (304).

People such as Patricia Hamilton and John Frick are determined to make Leroy and the likes feel sorry for their very existence; we see Leroy trying hard to keep his dignity and pride in such a demeaning environment. To both Frick and Patricia, Leroy is just too naive and foolish because he chooses to forgo lucrative prospects and does not bother to keep track of the other descendants of Alexander Hamilton. According to Frick, some of those descendants must be pretty “big” people now (290); and “big” to both Patricia and Frick is directly proportional to one’s material wealth.

Even though Patricia asks Frick to encourage his wife and make Karen feel “treasured” (312), she is herself unable to treasure Leroy. She frets over his charitable

donations of expensive tools to the museum; he should instead be selling them, she feels. Under the pressures of a materialist wife and an economically demanding culture, Leroy has recently started charging more for his work. It is quite evident that he is making these efforts to win Patricia's confidence, albeit making himself uncomfortable in the process. Perhaps Patricia is right in pointing out Leroy's "isolation", albeit she cannot understand what causes it. Leroy does not wish to participate in the race and certainly his ideals that oppose the flow isolate him from others—even from his own life partner.

Nevertheless, *The Last Yankee* is not just a depiction of class distinctions and struggles but also of the larger damage caused by the evil of Capitalism. While Patricia's depression can be linked to her failed Dream of America, Karen's situation throws light on the hollowness associated with material acquisition. Her husband's money-spinning oil business is not able to save her from the illness; he also appears completely defeated and depressed:

> FRICK: I just can't figure it out. There's no bills; we're very well fixed; she's got a beautiful home . . .. There's really not a trouble in the world. Although, God knows, maybe that's the trouble . . .
> LEROY: Oh no, I got plenty of bills and it didn't help mine. I don't think t's how many bills you have. (285)

According to American psychiatrist and author, Frank S. Pittman, it is the nature of wealth to be "addictive"; it temptingly offers "happiness" to people, but fails to give "satisfaction" (461-70). Those who have accomplished themselves financially are often forced to keep obsessing over it and hence continues their discontent. In modern societies that ride on material narcissism, human beings are bound to be victimized because of the current trends and popular culture; the playwright presents to us a critique of the same. The emotional dislocation of the characters can thus be attributed to a national culture that teaches acquisition and greed.

Erich Fromm states that while "the roots of Western culture, both Greek and Hebrew, considered the aim of life the *perfection of man*, modern man is concerned with the *perfection of things*, and the knowledge of how to make them" (*Zen* 79). In fact, Americans today have more material wealth than they had in the 1950s; an average American household is well equipped with various things that make life comfortable such as a TV set, washing machine, cars, etc. but the country has poor levels of contentment. In his research, Ed Diener proposes that despite their increasing wealth, the "subjective well-being" of Americans does not seem to be accelerating with their incomes (34-43).

Carlos Campo draws our attention to the fact that it is only when Patricia encounters the misery of the rich Fricks that she realizes the barrenness of such wealth; the Fricks have all those "wondrous objects" that Patricia wishes Leroy could get her and still the older couple are not happy ("Marriage" 67). Placed next to the insensitive Frick, Leroy's goodness shines in front of his wife; because unlike Frick, Leroy tries to support and encourage Karen to perform while Frick just leaves in anger. Leroy plays the song on his banjo for her to dance; even though Karen is not able to continue. Thus, Patricia's statement that "anybody with any sense has got to be depressed in this country, unless you are really rich, I suppose" (*CP* 297), reflects the worthlessness of her convictions and expectations.

Suniya S. Luthar, a professor of Psychology, who has researched extensively on mental illness in varied age groups and social classes, believes that the "cultural trivialization" of rich section's depression, the universal idea that the wealthy should not be depressed or sad, only adds to their "isolation and alienation" (1586). Luthar's research emphasizes on how the craving to be adored and acknowledged by one's peers is "universal"; and since the affluent are "often the focus of envy and dislike", they stay aware of the fact that their "misfortunes" will only supplement "malicious pleasure" in those who are relatively less privileged (1590), which is sure to worsen their condition. Karen, even though rich, is even more isolated and helpless than Patricia can ever be.

In *Broken Glass*, Phillip Gellburg, depicted as the main "provider" of his household during post-Depression years, is also a miserable victim of "work alienation". Phillip represents the struggling yet very successful working class that the upper business class (his boss, Stanton Case) exploit for their profits. It is very evident that Phillip's identity is completely based on the "prestigious" position he occupies at Case's firm; it is for his work identity that Phillip has sold off his real identity. Whenever Stanton Case needs a dirty deal fixed, he uses Gellburg and the moment he loses a deal, he reduces him to nothingness by suspecting him of joining hands with another Jew to cause the company this loss of profit. Phillip's collapse in his office is also a direct consequence of the pressures he has been living with to prove himself as a "successful" immigrant in America, who has been able to achieve the Dream.

Phillip manages to earn enough to provide all luxuries to his family; and equating material acquisition with human contentment, everyone expects the Gellburgs to be very happy, but, as can be observed, there is hardly any happiness in the Gellburg household. "My poor sister. And they have everything! But how can it be in the mind if she's so paralyzed?" (*CP* 341), Harriet poses her puzzle to Hyman.

Phillip is willing to buy Sylvia an expensive Dodge but unfortunately, he has been "dodging" all important questions related to their married life, for years altogether. Again, there may not be any "Depression" for Gellburg (343), but his identity conflicts, an asexual and discontent married life, and a paralysed wife symbolize his life's actual "depression". Therefore, despite his capacity to get the best medical help for his wife, Gellburg is helpless.

Prof. Helga Dittmar's research highlights how a culture of consumerism is a "cage within", wherein men and women are fooled into believing in the idea of a "good life" and a "perfect body" (24). "Internalization" of acquisitive morals leads individuals to believe that the chase of money and material goods will help them achieve important life goals such as happiness and a positive sense of self (26). This ever-increasing "appetite for consumption", that is often deemed essential for a "thriving economy" ends up giving people unhappier lives (26). Consumerist economies often abuse common individuals' "misguided search for identity and happiness" by rampant and forceful advertising (26) also. Miller warns us of such obsessions related to wealth and material pleasures. His works present the American nation's clock to be perennially ticking—on its way to complete disaster.

The playwright's message against consumerism is directly conveyed through his plays, *Resurrection Blues* and *Finishing the Picture* also, in which most central characters are not only rich but quite powerful as well. They represent the upper classes who control the means and yet they seem stuck in a situation of complete hopelessness and despair. The whole plot of *Resurrection Blues* is based on how the corrupt dictatorship of a banana republic joins hands with an American agency to generate profits by filming the murder of a human being, an act they conveniently tag as "crucifixion".

Through the characters of Henri and Felix, the play displays two different sides of consumerist yearning: while Felix is quite straightforward in his focus on material gain, a motive for which he has sold his morals to the American advertising company, Henri is involved in pseudo-philanthropy. Counted among those two percent people who own 96 percent of the land in the country, Henri owns many businesses, which are mostly inherited family ventures, and drives around in a Mercedes. In Miller's own country, in the year 2000, "1 percent population owned 40 percent and 10 percent, 73 percent", highlighting the state of economic disparity in the American nation (Bigsby, *Critical* 425).

> HENRI, *gripping his head*: Do you see why I am depressed? —nothing follows!
> FELIX: —The reason you're depressed is . . .
> HENRI, *grips his head*: I beg you, Felix, don't tell me why I'm depressed!

> FELIX: . . . It's because you're a rich man in a poor country, that's all . . . but we're moving, by god! (*CP* 447)

While Felix is quite clear about his lack of interest in helping the common masses, Henri worries about the poor, and intends selling all his land too. He even wants to undo his claim on his family businesses for which he is distinguished among the people of his land. But despite his concern for the poor and downtrodden of his country, Henri is no less a consumerist: he imports an expensive antique painting from Paris and gets a grand piano specially imported from New York, for his new concert-pianist wife. When Henri shops at one of those big stores in the city, he also ignores dead babies lying abandoned in the streets, like everyone else does.

> HENRI: You probably won't remember, but on my last visit I brought home an eighteenth-century painting from Paris, cost me twenty-six thousand dollars. The pollution in our air has since peeled off about a third of the paint.
> FELIX: That couldn't happen in Paris?
> HENRI: It's been sitting in Paris for two hundred and fifty years! . . . I had a grand piano shipped from New York for my wife . . .
> FELIX: The varnish cracked? (445)

At the core, the two cousins are deeply depressed; one so emotionally unstable and broken that he faces erectile dysfunction, the other unable to face a daughter he initiated into a revolution he himself abandoned for a life of comfort. The other characters of the play, including Emily Shapiro and Skip Cheeseboro, are also completely obsessed with wealth, paying little attention to morals and values. In fact, the whole plan of a public execution is nothing but a profit-oriented exercise for most characters of the play, and when that does not happen, they express anger and disappointment.

Finishing the Picture shows all characters completely obsessed with making profits out of a disintegrating actress because the picture must be finished and it must benefit everyone. Flora Fassinger, Kitty's acting guru in the play, is one impeccable embodiment of material obsession, ego, and narcissism. "I collect. I can't help myself. Some people smoke. I collect. If I have one, I have to have a pair; have two, I must have three" (508), she explains to Ochsner when asked why she wears so many watches. Flora justifies her material obsession by calling it a "collection", which is a typically consumerist streak. Even for Derek Clemson, an otherwise good-natured fellow, generating money seems to be the "bottom line" (Abbotson, *Critical* 166). Even though not very elaborately depicted, the director of Kitty's film is secretly smuggling artefacts. Kitty's mental and physical condition does not seem to matter at all. The play depicts an environment of absolute

alienation—where in their chase for money and reputation, people begin to treat a human being as a "commodity".

A consumerist lifestyle has long term adverse implications for the individual and society. *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* is perhaps the best example to give here. Lyman Felt has money enough to maintain two homes, two wives, and two lives, in two different places but Lyman is not happy— he suffers more than others in the play, who he has been cheating for years altogether. Pain and anguish are his only companions at the end, when he happens to lose both his wives and children because of his ingrained immorality. The indication in the play that his accident could be a possible suicide attempt points towards internal sadness and depression, which has apparently remained hidden under the facade of his fancy cars and expensive living; it was a Porsche he crashed.

> LEAH: Well . . . it's that he wants so much; like a kid at a fair; a jelly apple here, a cotton candy there, and then a ride on a loop-the-loop . . . and it never lets up in him; and sometimes it almost seemed as though he'd lived once before, another life that was completely deprived, and this time around he mustn't miss a single thing. (*CP* 223)

Lyman defends his immorality by stating that his wives should not be blaming him because he "provided" enough to both. In the end, Lyman Felt gets his answer in his isolation after his ride down "Mount More-Gain" (qtd in Abbotson, *Student* 148). "But I made a good living" (249), he says to shut all blames against himself but the audience sees him as a failure for life.

This array of characters, representing different classes and mind-sets of modern American culture, highlights human misery in relation to material egotism. While characters such as Patricia Hamilton, John Frick, and Skip Cheeseboro believe money to be the god of all things, there are characters such as Leroy Hamilton and Nurse Logan, who embody the spirit of hard-work and modesty; these characters may be rare in Miller's plays but they exist, nonetheless, even though easily ignored in the American mainstream.

In a nation dominated by greed, vanity, egotism, and despair, human relationships are inevitably bound to suffer. These selected plays also throw light on the pressure modern relationships are constantly subjected to— human trauma originates from and contributes to relational dryness among men and women. Miller showcases modern-day family and marriage to be devoid of warmth and love as men and women in these plays live lives of selfishness and isolation.

Another very important theme in the selected plays is the one related to estranged contracts of "family", a social unit which is bound to suffer when its individual entities suffer. This base of human existence is shown by Miller as a disintegrating whole; people are numbed and so are familial and social bonds. According to Abbotson, most of the internal and external conflicts that human beings face in Miller's plays are a result of corrupted family dynamics, that is, the relationships between various members of the family, including both alive and dead members (*Critical* 388). The "family" in Miller's plays is formed of members who fail to work in unison; they instead appear to be working against each other (388). Family members in his plays also predominantly fail to take "responsibility" for each other; and lack feelings of "trust", "gratitude", "compassion", and "love" (388-9). Because Miler shows families as "microcosms for the larger society", he wishes for us to view his "family plays" as "social drama" (388).

A closer look at the selected plays helps one realize that all of these stories are predominantly Miller's commentaries on "marriage", which is often considered the foundation of a family, but here it is just a source of more isolation. These plays focus on the theme of sexual relations between adults, and highlight the relationship between sexual bonding and the prevalence of psychological conditions such as depression and emotional abandonment (Scanlan 187). Marriages in Miller's later drama appear to be "fractured" unions— "tumultuous affairs" filled with selfishness, contempt, adultery, and lies (Campo, "Marriage" 56).

The Ride Down Mt. Morgan, The Last Yankee, and *Broken Glass* explicitly depict the angst related to the institution of marriage and are commonly referred to as Miller's three successive plays "about marriage" (Scanlan 183) and also as his "damaged wives' series" (182). The emotional dislocation of characters in these plays illustrates how men and women unintentionally cause a lot of damage to themselves and each other (184); "mutual destruction" appears intrinsic to the bond of marriage (187).

The marital conflict between the two couples of *The Last Yankee* seems to be one of the chief factors responsible for the women's clinical depression. In *Broken Glass* also, we see Sylvia Gellburg's paralysis to be closely related to her marriage with Phillip. *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* exposes the many lies that the couples in the play have been living for years altogether—lying first to themselves, then to their partners and children, and then to the world at large.

According to Baanders, the "facade of a happy marital life" hides all sorts of misery and disappointments, apparent in the relationship between the married couples in *Broken*

Glass (214). Sylvia and Phillip live in two totally separate worlds, both equally isolated; they cannot even communicate with each other. Therefore, the idea of sexual intimacy seems far-fetched. The Gellburgs, united by "race and marriage", are also divided by both (Biggs 213). Even though close family members have known the bleakness of their marriage all along, nothing much has been done to solve their problems—either by the couple or by others around them. When Harriet senses Sylvia blaming herself for Phillip's collapse, she remarks:

> HARRIET: . . . I refuse to believe that you are blaming yourself for this. How can people start saying what they know? —there wouldn't be two marriages left in Brooklyn! (*Nearly overcome.*) It's ridiculous! —you're the best wife he could have had! —better (*She hurries out. Pause.)* (*CP* 378)

Sylvia's sister may be simply commenting on the general nature of marriages, but in doing so, she happens to unravel a profound truth about this social contract— specifically for how "marriage" appears to be in Miller's dramatic domain.

As Cobes states in a review of the play, *Broken Glass* is "a little bit about being Jewish and a lot about sexual repression" (98). Sylvia's doctor becomes her emblematic lover as he compliments her body and personality, thus reinvigorating her sexuality in an indirect way. It is because her "up-tight, insecure and defensive" husband paralyzes her completely that Sylvia is forced to see in Hyman her "lover" (Tomasch 81); he compliments her body, gets her to imagine having had sex with him. And once her guard is down, Sylvia tells him the dark secrets of her repressed living with Phillip.

But it is not only Sylvia and Phillip's marriage that seems to be under strain and agony, it is also the other couple in the play, the Hymans, who are also only seemingly happy and compatible with each other. A closer analysis of their lives gives us a reality check on marriages in general. The Hymans are sexually closer but even their sexual intimacy works as a façade for a deeper emotional conflict and damage. As discussed previously, Hyman's womanizing continually causes Margaret distress. She knows that her husband's interest in Sylvia's case has something to do with Sylvia being a remarkably charming and beautiful woman also. Harry Hyman seeks the social and moral connection that he sees in Sylvia, something he deeply believes to be lacking in his own life. He is drawn to her because Sylvia's "needs are manifest" (Bigsby, *Critical* 396). We can observe the sexual charge between Sylvia and Hyman and even though they don't consummate, this sexual energy for once is sufficient to get Sylvia to her feet (394); however, she collapses after a few faltering steps.

Margaret's derisive comments may appear harsh but they do expose the damage Hyman causes to his own marriage in the process of repairing the Gellburgs' paralysed marriage. Even though Hyman claims that he has not been involved with any woman in the last "ten or twelve years" (*CP* 360), Margaret's "trust issues" have not really ebbed (Tomasch 78).

> MARGARET: I will never understand it. Except I do, I guess; you believe women. Woman tells you the earth is flat and for that five minutes you're swept away, helpless.
> HYMAN: You know what baffles me?
> MARGARET: . . . And it's irritating. —What is it—just new ass all the time?
> (*CP* 360)

At a first glance, Margaret and Hyman seem to be the modern open-minded couple who live more like friends and have no inhibitions or problems, but digging deeper unmasks the reality of their "marital bliss". They have a fancy marriage where their bond is not based on soulful love but only on a mutual physical attraction. Hyman is always able to transport his wife into a world of sexual fantasy:

> HYMAN: And then we go swimming . . .
> MARGARET: Harry, that's lovely.
> HYMAN: And I hire this shark to swim very close and we just manage to get out of the water, and we're so grateful to be alive we fall down on the beach together and . . .
> MARGARET (*pressing his lips shut*): Sometimes you're so good. (*She kisses him.*)
> (333)

Just a few moments before this "romantic" conversation, Margaret was taunting her husband about his attraction to Sylvia and then, almost as if practicing some sort of escapism, Hyman makes Margaret romanticize about sharks and white horses to distract her, and evidently, he is quite successful too. However, a comparative analysis of the two marriages helps us conclude that the Hymans are in a much better place than the Gellburgs for while Margaret herself chooses to stay married to Hyman, Sylvia has stayed in her marriage for her "mother's sake, and Jerome's sake, and everybody's sake" but not her own (341).

Lying to one's spouse, keeping the bond more superficial than soulful, seems to be a common practice in modern marriages as depicted in Miller's plays. *The Ride down Mt. Morgan* opens an intense argument, comparing the love of men and the love of women and the role of sexual attachments in the lives of adults; it illustrates how "betrayal is matched

against duty and entitlement" (Scanlan 184). Leah's desire of her self-designed marriage vows reflects the state of commitment between married partners:

> LEAH: But can I tell you the wedding vow I wish we could make? —it's going to sound strange, but.
> LYMAN: No! —say it!
> LEAH: I'm embarrassed but I will: "Dearly beloved, I promise everything good, but I might have to lie to you sometime." Could one say that and still love someone? Because it's the truth . . . nobody knows what can happen, right?
>
> (*CP* 216)

And Lyman Felt's marriages to Theo and Leah highlight the concavity of any vows taken by the couples. While Hyman at least attempts to change his philandering ways, Lyman Felt is an unscrupulous and crooked bigamist, who still believes that he is worthy of the love and affection of both his wives and children because he has successfully "provided" for them. However, the crash of his two marriages is not only his fault; the wives also never completely acted responsibly. The playwright himself described *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* as a "picaresque play about marriage" (Gottfried 427) because the hollowness of marital commitments surfaces clearly in the two marriages showcased in the play.

The Last Yankee showcases two couples who have lost the "spiritual buoyancy" of their lives (Hart 277). The play depicts the pressures faced by married couples in this "post-modern age", where they must constantly deal with "chaos and insecurity" (Abbotson, *Critical* 20) because "accusation, guilt, and self-doubt have clogged the arteries of affection." (Bigsby, *Cambridge* 173). Marital bonds are constantly threatened by "blame game": Patricia admits that she when she stops blaming Leroy, she immediately feels better about everything. "I must not blame Leroy anymore . . .. It's just not his fault, I have to remember that…" (*CP* 298), she says but when Leroy and Patricia talk to each other, they can be seen playing their usual blame-game:

> LEROY: . . . I've had some jobs I've enjoyed . . .
> PATRICIA: But not your wife.
> LEROY: It's a long time since I blamed you, Pat. It's your upbringing.
> PATRICIA: Well I could blame yours too, couldn't I.
> LEROY: You sure could.
> PATRICIA: I mean this constant optimism is very irritating when you're fifty times more depressed than I am. (304)

Patricia says that she feels "like a log that keeps bumping against another log in the middle of the river" (304) to explain to Leroy how she feels in her marital bond with him.

The older couple in the play, Fricks, seem completely distant from each other just like the Gellburgs of *Broken Glass.* The confinements of both Sylvia and Karen— the former's to the wheelchair and latter's to the mental institution, respectively, point sharply to these women's "repressed" married lives that followed their equally restraining childhoods (Griffin 183).

Karen is paralysed to an extent that she does not even dare blame her husband for her condition— she blames herself. She just stands muted and depressed, fearing her partner, trying to win his approval through her tap-dance. Even though shrewd at business, Frick appears to be emotionally blank, unable to relate and empathise with others. As a husband, regardless of his love for Karen, Frick stands as a complete failure as he cannot reach out to her; in fact, he is rather ashamed of her. Karen wants to involve John in her moment of freedom when she dances. The two cannot match their rhythm; he sings too fast for her, signifying their varying pace and incompatibility. He has moved too fast for his wife to cope. However, saying that John Frick has no love for his wife would be a false statement; much like Phillip Gellburg who loves Sylvia but emotionally deprives her, Frick is unable to help Karen as an emotional anchor. The Fricks love each other; and according to Abbotson, this fact makes their "disconnection" even more catastrophic (*Critical* 220).

What happens at the end of this play is not a revelation to the audience: Karen is left behind because the man she relies upon leaves in the middle of her tap-dancing, and here we can totally imagine the many times Karen must have felt abandoned like this. Even though Patricia Hamilton is trapped in a "success mythology" (*CE* 525), Leroy's calm and patient love for her is a hope for a positive future for the couple (Abbotson, *Critical* 25). Patricia is able to pack her bags to leave for home with Leroy because Leroy, as a partner, appears more determined to accept his wife's condition.

In Miller's opinion, "marriage is a case of mutual forgiveness" (qtd in Bigbsy, *Cambridge* 173). We can see the Hamiltons approaching towards this state of compassion and devotion. Despite the depiction of various problems caused by marriage, in Leroy's selfless devotion, we can see hope. Leroy has raised his seven kids with whatever little means he has had and has completely devoted his time and life to family; he is still hopeful of a life with Patricia. Therefore, it is easy to see that while Karen's problem lies with her husband, Patricia's cure lies with hers. Both Fricks and Gellburgs fail to repair their relationship throughout the play; the two couples represent the "individual and social paralysis" that American culture successfully breeds. The Hamiltons and Hymans may be

far from perfect but they are able to love and support each other, nonetheless. Divorce, infidelity, and selfishness are written all over modern relationships.

Apart from these three "marriage plays", the other selected plays also fail to depict a positive picture of marriage in the modern times. At the very start of *Resurrection Blues*, that is, Act 1, Scene 2, the conversation between Emily Shapiro and Skip Cheeseboro informs us of someone's divorce date (*CP* 453). Emily is concurrently involved with different men; she is also not sure about her newly conceived child's paternity. Her mother telephonically suggests her to get married to someone called "Max Fleisher" (461) but the daughter confesses to her that she cannot because she is not sure about who the father is. She tells her mother that the prospect of being with the "same person" for the rest of her life is unbearable to her (461). Emily's character highlights the modern disillusionment with marriage as a social contract; her opinion on marriage embodies a general phobia related to serious commitments, which if we observe closely, is a modern day apprehension. Aware of Felix's attraction to her, she agrees to be with him only because she wants to see how "powerful" men behave in bed (483). Despite being a married man, Felix has been philandering around, and now he proposes to divorce his wife to win the American film director over:

> FELIX: I will divorce.
> EMILY (*blurting):* Oh no, you mustn't do that! . . . I mean you're a Catholic, aren't you?
> FELIX: I am ready to go to hell! I cannot lose you!
> EMILY: But my dear, I'm not prepared for . . . I assume you are talking commitment? (484)

As Jeanine says in the prologue, she has been deserted by her husband and her father has recently remarried; there appears to be no stability in the marital union, whatsoever.

In *Finishing the Picture*, the marriage between Paul and Kitty is shown to be running on purely professional grounds. Other people know more about Kitty's condition than Paul, her life partner, does. He knows his presence only upsets Kitty, so he stops being visible to her. Even though Paul is concerned, he seems unable to help his wife. He is aware that she needs to be loved and not needed; he knows Kitty can be revived but he also fails to take control of the situation.

> OCHSNER: Paul—I'd like to know what you think—personally, as her husband.
> PAUL: What I think? Her life as her by the throat. There is no way to reach into her that I know of. We're all a little bit angry at her, that's inevitable—but the key to this lock is probably love. Which she can't accept. (522)

As her spouse, Paul should be responsible for Kitty but he clearly is not; in fact, Kitty and Paul barely communicate. In frustration, Paul asks Jerome: "who is responsible for her (Kitty)?" (545). With both Derek and Edna, Kitty talks about Paul and their failing marriage, evidencing the fact that her relationship with her husband affects her as a person. Kitty only screams when Paul enters her space, forcing Edna to remove him from her vicinity. "I didn't save her, I didn't bring the miracle", he simply says when Edna asks him to be hopeful for their marriage (554).

In *I Can't Remember Anything* also, it is news of separation that Leonora receives from her son (11). One of the chief causes of marital failure, and failure of human relationships in general, implicitly highlighted by Miller, is "collapsed communication". In *The Last Yankee,* the two men are unable to come to a middle ground to communicate with each other. They sit for a long moment in silence, just staring in blankness (291). While talking to Leroy, Frick rushes through his sentences almost as if he finds communication to be a total waste of time, which seems to be one of the main reasons for a lack of connect between himself and his wife. It is the same gap that Leroy feels with his wife, which renders them unable to feel completely for each other. In the "liminal institution", the Fricks and the Hamiltons can learn new ways to communicate with each other (Egerton, "Sick" 126) but only the younger couple are able to reach some middle ground to patch up their differences. Patricia's recovery seems to be right on track only because her partner places much trust in her; in fact, this unflinching trust is beyond Patricia's own understanding also. Just like Leroy places his trust in his old car, he also trusts and loves Patricia, his wife of many years, with whom he looks forwards to a happy life.

Miller's later plays, especially his "marriage plays", shout out for a need to communicate and confront. *The Last Yankee* is not merely about sitting across the table from one another but also acknowledging the inadequacy of those words which can only divide and those values and myths that can only demean (Bigsby, *Cambridge* 177). In Scene 2 of Act 1, Patricia's suggestion to Karen is symbolic of the same need to talk and confront: "Why are we doing this? Come, let's talk" (*CP* 292). In fact, what Patricia says about the game of ping-pong to Karen, also "metaphorically" relates to her marital bond with Leroy (Campo, "Marriage" 66). They must stop playing these "games" and sit down and finally talk to each other, which is what the couple can be seen doing towards the end of the play. On the other hand, the Fricks fail at this need to revive their relationship. In *Broken Glass,* the Gellburgs finally speak up and assert themselves, but as can be

witnessed, it gets too late for them; Phillip Gellburg makes futile attempts to communicate with his wife—which lead the couple nowhere. The Gellburgs indeed appear to have become "each other's prisoners and wardens", making each other sick— both physically and mentally (Tomasch 77).

Nevertheless, despite such sad portrayal of modern day relationships, Miller points towards marriage as an essential social contract that can help the world moving into complete isolation. While characters such as John Frick, Lyman Felt, and Phillip Gellburg, stand for the insensitive and brutal side of marriage, other characters in these plays, such as Leroy Hamilton, Nurse Logan, and Tom Wilson, stand for loyalty and purity of marital and familial love. Healthy marriages in Miller's works may appear to be scarce but it is more of the playwright's depiction of a social problem than an opinion on marriages, per say (Campo, "Marriage" 56).

In fact, it is not only marriage that's under threat but the overall structure of a family in the modern world. Even the relationships between parents and children are threatened in the fast-paced industrial society that we see in these plays. In *Danger: Memory*, Clara's father has estranged himself from his daughter by preaching her fallacies; Detective Lew Fine in the same play has lost his son to suicide and blames himself for not being there for him. Leonora also receives a letter from a son who does not stay with her but communicates once in a while via mail. In *Resurrection Blues,* there is definitely estrangement not only between the two male cousins but also between Jeanine and her father. In *The Last Yankee,* Karen also feels sad about her mother discarding her by leaving the family farm to a distant cousin and not to her own daughter. In *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*, it is not only Lyman's wives who become estranged from him but also his children, Bessie and Benjamin.

What emerges to be true about the overall family structure in these plays is the intense isolation and alienation experienced by men and women in the modern times. Miller recognizes materialism, capitalism, and untruthful success policies to be causing disappointment, separation, and estrangement among people. The treatment to this ailment does not lie in "the absence of illness, but in the presence of well-being" (Fromm, *Zen* 86), and "well-being" can be assured only when human beings overcome their feelings of alienation—when they become capable of being fully connected to themselves and to others.

Chapter 4

Dramatic Technique

According to Arthur Miller's playwriting mentor,

> Drama is the most artificial of the literary forms, the most civilized. A theatre is a social institution and imposes elaborate conventions and rigidities of form and technique. The question for the person aspiring to write drama is, Will he let the restrictions of form stand in his way, merely as hurdles or obstacles to be overleaped, or can he, by mastering them, make them the servants of his creative impulse? (Rowe 10)

And according to one of the greatest dramatists of all times, George Bernard Shaw, "the greatest artist" is one who is willing to go a "step beyond the demand", to produce "works of a higher beauty and a higher interest than have yet been perceived" (315). Arthur Miller has indeed proved himself accomplished and successful on both parameters of dramatic art. His plays are testimony to the fact that he indeed mastered the form to create works of "higher beauty and higher interest"—and that always with an even higher social purpose.

Writing drama certainly requires a "special kind of imagination", which is what sets dramatists apart from novelists (Rowe 9). The dramatist is required to be carrying his words in his head while the novelist can put them down on the paper (9). Unlike a novel, which may devote several paragraphs to describing the setting, a stage play is limited to what the audience can see on stage. Therefore, it is important that the playwright give some indication to setting, clothing, movement, and manner. The stage directions are essential in providing information about what the stage should look like; they also convey to the actors where or how to move, or what facial expressions or tone of voice is appropriate when speaking a line. Even for plays not performed on stage, these inputs from the playwright are indispensable to visualise the entire action of a play text.

Thus, stage directions, if by no means more important, can be deemed as important as the plot in a stage play; they are the heart of the very technique that goes into creating theatre plays. Through his explanatory comments and directions written in the parentheses in a play script, the playwright drops hints regarding the setting and the atmosphere of dramatic action that takes place on stage. Setting, lighting, essential movements, intonations, etc., are all made known to the reader/ audience through stage directions—they give a clear picture of how the playwright visualises a character or scene. Also, in any

discussion pertaining to the dramatic technique of a playwright, his ability to understand his audience's moods and reactions matters the most.

In the selected plays, Arthur Miller points at minute nuances such as the physical appearance of characters (including their costumes and props), but, Miller's skill as a dramatist also lies in how he titles his plays and names his characters, and how he often uses his characters as symbols. In the mammoth body of Arthur Miller's theatrical output, it is a challenge to spot a character or play named inaptly. The selected plays demonstrate how in terms of his technique of dramatic presentation, the playwright managed to remain consistent and skilled till the very last plays he wrote.

A skilled dramatic technician creates an impression about his work even when his reader/ audience has not yet read or watched his play. The titles of Miller's plays are significant pointers to the themes he explores through them. For instance, *The Last Yankee* seems appropriately titled because Leroy Hamilton, the play's titular character, calls himself the last of his line of Yankees, which can be interpreted as a departure from the "breed of self-assured victors" of America (Osterwalder 322-23). Through his Yankee carpenter, Miller portrays his breed's decline. Abbotson believes the title of this play to be extremely ambiguous ("Reconnecting" 65): for it certainly creates curiosity about the play as the audience is forced to wonder—if the playwright means it for the whole of America or only for the Yankee community in the country.

Broken Glass alludes to *Kristallnacht,* which translates to "night of broken glass" or "crystal night"; also, this title can be interpreted on multiple levels. Other than being a direct evocation of Holocaust, it may also refer to the glass that the bridegroom breaks at a Jewish wedding ceremony (Abbotson, *Student* 112). It may even be interpreted as a reminder of the destruction of a temple in Jerusalem (112), but viewed broadly, the title stands for the fragmented and broken human existence, specifically signalling the condition of men and women in modern America. Unpredictably, *Broken Glass* was the play's third and final title: the first being "The Man in Black" and second "The Gellburgs" (Abbotson, *Critical* 82-83). The changing titles of the play reflect the gradual development of the play's story; initially it centred only around one individual, that is, Phillip Gellburg, then around the Jewish couple in America, and finally it evolved to be a commentary on the whole of America (83). According to Plunka, this title "establishes the connection between the public and the personal spheres" that Miller beautifully interlaces all through the play (18). In fact, additionally, "broken glass" can be understood as "a mirror", in which each character of the play "must look at himself or herself" to take charge of their own destiny; even before

assuming "moral responsibility" for the genocide of German Jews (31). But, as is evident, the characters fail to do so—and hence, the broken glass (31).

The Ride Down Mt. Morgan is also a fitting title for the play as it narrates the fall of a man in his chase of "More-Gain" (qtd in Abbotson, *Student* 148). It is certainly Lyman's "ride down"; his chase has indeed finally failed. *Resurrection Blues* quite naturally draws on two contradictory feelings: the possible "resurrection" and the associated "blues" because at the end of the play, there is no crucifixion. In a tongue-in-cheek fashion, the play challenges the audience by asking them—how will it be if by chance Christ called on us one day. Felix Barriaux and others in the play entertain the idea of a modern-day crucifixion for vested interests and financial gains, thus rendering pious Christian sentiments and feelings cheaply commercialised and misused.

I Can't Remember Anything and *Clara* have been collectively titled as *Danger: Memory,* highlighting the various dimensions of human memory, and how one's past can pose a danger. Both excessive holding on and letting go have their distinct perils. When Mel Gussow asked Miller about these two plays, the playwright replied: "they're both plays about trying not to remember. Memory is the danger . . ." (*Conversations* 164). Likewise, the titles of the other two plays, *Mr. Peters' Connections* and *Finishing the Picture,* even though not artistically symbolic, quite directly convey the main plot of the plays.

The audience and critics observe this skill with the names of characters as well: for instance, there is a proposed resonance of "clarity" in the name of the murdered young girl in the play, *Clara,* that naturally draws one's attention to what Albert Kroll actually needs in life—better "clarity" (Abbotson, *Critical* 98). In *Broken Glass,* the name of Sylvia's physician, "Hyman" has direct sexual implications. Regarding the naming of Lyman Felt, Gottfried suggests that his is not a name that could have been randomly chosen by the playwright (431); Felt is a corrupt bigamist actually quite incapable of "feeling" anything. The entire narration in the play points towards how he been a "lie-man" throughout— living lies all his life, maintaining two different lives quite flippantly and remorselessly. He lies to his second wife, Leah, that he has already divorced Theo, his first wife, and continues with duality. In fact, Abbotson also believes that the similarity between the names, Lyman and Loman, is not merely a matter of chance ("Naming" 11). In *Death of a Salesman,* we see that the main character, Loman, dies a miserable death only because he lacks both the luck and skills that Lyman possesses. Miller's "Lie-man" of the 1990s can hence be viewed as a much richer version of his 1950s' "Low-man". The fact that both these characters attempt to escape the realities of life, causing their own car accidents, highlights the utter

uselessness of material acquisition, a chase inculcated in people through their capitalistic culture.

In the same play, Leah has a name that phonetically stands for the one "who is more capable of being the liar" (Abbotson, *Critical* 307), but, paradoxically, it is not only she who is capable of lying and dishonesty in the play. As can be observed, Theodora, the good conservative wife of Lyman's, is also quite fluent with manipulations and lies: she manipulates the whole shark episode in front of Tom to gain his sympathy and also blame Lyman for all her life's woes (*CP* 237-8). Even Theo's name has a religious implication with its "root connection to theology, the study of religion", pointing both to her "rational" side and her upbringing as a clergyman's daughter (Abbotson, "Naming" 12).

Leo and Leonora in *I Can't Remember Anything* are named correspondingly to present them as versions/extensions of each other; they indeed represent two different sides of the human personality—and the struggles between wanting to remember and the temptation to forget. In *Resurrection Blues,* the mysterious "son of god" is named Ralph, which is a masculine given name, literally meaning the "counsel wolf" (*Etymology Dictionary*) and Ralph indeed is the proclaimed messiah and counsel in the play. The changing names of Ralph keep the audience and other characters guessing about his real existence—whether Ralph is a messiah or not, remains a mystery till the end.

The two Monroe-like figures in the selected plays, Cathy May and Kitty, featuring in *Mr. Peters' Connections* and *Finishing the Picture*, respectively, have apparently similar sounding names. Also, both these names originate from formal feminine name, "Catherine", meaning "pure" (*Etymology Dictionary*). Both Kitty and Cathy are viewed mostly as sex objects, yet, their names only reflect "purity". They are both women struggling in the clutches of a demeaning male-dominated environment.

In *The Last Yankee*, Leroy's name embodies a "dualistic tension"—Leroy (le roi), means "the king" but in Miller's play, Leroy Hamilton is just a poor carpenter, trying hard to make ends meet (Egerton, "Sick" 122). In fact, despite his rich lineage and the opportunities he can get through it, Leroy just wishes to remain a "regular guy" (122). However, what must not skip one's attention while analyzing Leroy's name and character is that even though he is a poor American carpenter, through his ability to stay detached from material chase, Leroy manages to come across as the king of his own world, if not of the world outside.

Likewise, even Patricia's name embodies a dual strain: her name is a feminine derivative of Latin "*patricius*", meaning "patrician, noble" (*Etymology Dictionary)*. She

certainly comes from a family of high achievers but through her marriage to Leroy, she is no longer a part of her rich family. In fact, she has travelled down the "line" by marrying a carpenter.

In his essay, "About Theatre Language", Miller gives an explanation on how he wanted to present authentic characters in a plain universal situation in *The Last Yankee* (*CE* 525). The characters in *The Last Yankee* represent the whole of the United States. This method of characterization is not restricted to just *The Last Yankee*; Miller's dramatic technique is also strongly based in his ability to create symbolic characters on stage. For instance, in *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*, the haunting presence of Lyman's dead father works as a warning to his son. Tom Wilson, Lyman's lawyer-friend, is an "Everyman figure" in the play (Abbotson, *Critical* 309) while Lyman himself is a symbol of his age as he stands for both greed and resultant anarchy.

Lyman's young daughter, Bessie, symbolizes the voice of conscience in the drama of his life. Her role may seem insignificant, but at the end, she is the voice that Miller wants us to listen to. She is the only character associated with Lyman who holds very tightly to truth and reason. She is enraged at her mother when Theo considers taking Lyman back and chastises Lyman saying, "will you once in your life think of another human being?" (*CP* 270), reminding the audience of Chris Keller telling the same to his guilty father in Miller's *All My Sons* (1947). Bessie is indeed a prophet-like figure who offers words of wisdom, which are largely ignored; her words are also strongly evocative of the New Testament, insisting on considering others before oneself (Abbotson, "Naming" 12).

Nurse Logan in the same play stands for basic human acceptance, patience, and love that the Lymans have been lacking. When left alone with Logan in the end, Lyman asks her, "Hate me?" (*CP* 277). She simply replies, "I don't know. I got to think about it" (277). Logan thus symbolizes the audience at large (Otten 212) as we, like Logan, find it difficult to judge Lyman black and white.

The lion that Lyman faces and mentally defeats may not be a character in the play but it is symbolic of a position of extreme power and invincibility. Lyman feels a "lionlike" vanity in his actions, even though his actions are just animalistic, violent, and shameful (Abbotson, "Naming" 12). He is both "lionized – and lying" (Schlueter 510): the lion stands for Lyman's wish for unrestricted freedom without any allegiance to the moral laws of the society (Otten 213). He challenges the lion: I dare you to eat me, but, when the lion does nothing, the bigamist simply declares himself guilt-free.

The motionless patient in *The Last Yankee* is again a symbolic figure in the play—serving both as "warning and accusation" (Abbotson, *Critical* 222). The immobile, mute depressive points towards America's visible decline and collective mental illness. She, through her silence, accuses the many forces of the American nation that render individuals thus. The anonymous patient's muted presence in the play highpoints the fact that psychiatry, as a treatment procedure, may never be enough to help the human situation; it cannot "restore health or intimacy" (Egerton, "Sick" 130). Leroy Hamilton in the same play is the symbol of fertility and growth: he is a "healthy grower of food and children" (Abbotson, *Reconnecting* 64). He is the spirit of true Yankeeism that is required to save America from its apparent paralysis (64).

While the central female characters of the selected plays, Sylvia, Jeanine, Patricia, and Kitty are symbolic of the malaise of their respective societies, some male characters of these plays such as Felix Barriaux and Skip Cheeseboro of *Resurrection Blues*, stand for the brutal corruption and commercialism of their respective countries. Likewise, Henri Schultz in the same play symbolizes "pseudo intellectualism" of the rich and powerful, who try hard to seem "ordinary" and "benevolent".

Miller's drama is indeed the tragedy and comedy of the common man's life, which is the case about most modern drama. The drama of our day is middleclass in character as it deals with the joys and travails of an ordinary individual's life; it exhibits on stage situations and characters that we are more likely to encounter in our everyday lives—the "affairs of the average man" (Henderson 433-4). However, in terms of their setting, the selected plays have nothing "commonplace". These plays do not take place in conventional domestic settings like Miller's previous works did. *The Last Yankee* and *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* are set entirely in hospitals. *Finishing the Picture* is set in a hotel, *Mr. Peters' Connections* in a dilapidated night club, and *Resurrection Blues* also mostly away from domesticity. Even in the domestic space that Miller does show, for instance, in *Danger: Memory* and *Broken Glass,* the audience fails to feel the warmth of home-life. By shifting the scene to hospitals, distant hotels, and shattered nightclubs, the playwright signals at a lack of privacy and domesticity in the modern American scenario, which is replete with evils such as clinical depression, divorce, and bigamy. The overall familial environment required for healthy human survival is not visible in these plays.

According to Hans Osterwalder, the transference of stage setting from a home to a mental institution in *The Last Yankee* is a symbolic choice on Arthur Miller's part: "the breakdown of the nuclear family resulting in mental illness is on public display" now as

the wives who are traditionally seen as care-givers and security providers of the house are at a mental hospital (320-321). This deliberate choice of the mental institution instead of somebody's home is more of an implication pointing towards insanity being the "last refuge" for so many Americans (Abbotson, *Critical* 25).

Katherine Egerton's research on Miller's later plays highlights the hospital setting as a "liminal space" ("Sick" 104); she states that hospitals signify both disease and its treatment as they are symbolic of both life and death—of illness and recovery. In one way, the hospital is an "achievement of a compassionate civic society", but, at the same time, it is a prison for the sick (106). The hospitals are chiefly "instruments of social control" as they keep the sick away from the healthy (106). Egerton adds that even though Miller chooses "hospital" as a setting, he seldom portrays them in a realistic fashion: therefore, the audience can relate to the hospital as an "idea" and not as an "actuality" (107). We do not see any hospital staff in the selected plays, except for Nurse Logan in *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*, who, again, is not what we expect a regular hospital nurse to be like. Logan is not seen administering any treatment to Lyman; she stays with him only as a neutral, calm listener. Egerton draws attention to the fact that a lot of things unthought-of by the audience such as Karen Frick tap-dancing in the hospital ward instead of in the confines of her basement and Patricia controlling her own treatment without her doctor's knowledge in *The Last Yankee*, or the Lymans performing a full-fledged family drama of their own in *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*, are activities that are usually not possible in real hospitals.

In *The Last Yankee*, the state hospital is not just a choice of stage setting as it also reflects the economic choices and statuses of the two males whose wives are patients at this state facility. While Leroy Hamilton certainly cannot afford private health institutions for his wife, even though her rich relatives are ready to pay for the same, Frick chooses this place of treatment for Karen simply because he is a miser:

> LEROY: . . . Come around saying it's a disgrace for their sister to be in a public institution. . . So I said, "Well, I'm the public!
> FRICK: Sure! —It's a perfectly nice place.
> LEROY: They want her in the Rogers Pavilion.
> FRICK: Rogers! —that's a couple of hundred dollars a day minimum . . .
> LEROY: Well if I had that kind of money I wouldn't mind, but . . .
> FRICK: No-no, don't you do it. I could afford it, but what are we paying taxes for?
> (*CP* 287)

Another important thing to note here is that both these plays, which take place in a hospital, share more than just their setting—as the two deal with marital relations and

complications between men and women in the modern world. The hospital setting can also be interpreted as public encroachment upon the very "private" nature of one's deformities and illnesses. The problems between husbands and wives are out in the public in these two plays.

Even though *Broken Glass* is not set in a hospital but many scenes of the play are set in Dr. Hyman's clinic, which is shown attached to his own house. In fact, that is where the play begins: Phillip Gellburg is seen waiting for Dr. Hyman in his clinic (321). The problems of Dr. Hyman's patients quite naturally flow into his personal abode, and vice versa: Phillip gets irritated when Mrs. Margaret Hyman probes into his wife's illness. He later says to Hyman, "I don't come here to be talking to her" (354), annoyed at his personal problems becoming 'public knowledge'. Likewise, Sylvia's bedroom is also converted into an "examination room" (Marino "Physician" 52). Confined to a wheelchair, Sylvia herself cannot visit the doctor's clinic, so, the doctor has to pay her visits. Later in the play, the audiences see the negative impact of this overlap of personal and public spaces: Phillip gets insecure with the doctor's entry into their individual space because he can observe the evident attraction between his wife and the physician.

The last scenes of the play show the Gellburg household as nothing less than a miniature hospital in itself. Having suffered a heart stroke, now even Phillip is bedridden; Scene 5 of the last Act of the play shows the Gellburgs' bedroom on stage and the stage directions read, "*Hyman is putting his stethoscope back into his bag, and sits on a chair beside the bed*" (*CP* 379). Even though Phillip requires a hospital for his better care, he chooses to stay at home, thus converting his home into a place of treatment.

> HYMAN: I can only tell you again, Phillip, —you belong in the hospital. GELLBURG: Please don't argue about it anymore! I couldn't stand it there, it smells like a zoo; and to lay in a bed where some stranger died . . .. I hate it. If I'm going out I'll go from here. And I don't want to leave Sylvia. (379)

Clara is set in a home but it is also the scene of a young woman's murder, a private space being encroached upon by police and detectives, trying to solve the murder mystery. According to Scanlan, *Clara's* setting shows us a scene that we do not wish to acknowledge in our everyday lives (182). The play begins with Albert Kroll lying on the floor of Clara's New York apartment, where he has found her murdered body in one of the bloodied rooms. While Detective Lew Fine sits right over his head, to question him, to investigate the murder case, Lew's team ransack the house and go through various personal belongings of Clara and her family. Her music records, her bird— everything that once meant so much to

her, has now been rendered public by this intrusion. Fine describes what Clara's living room looks like:

> FINE: There are two cups on the stove with teabags, and the kettle is melted. There was a fight but no sign of forced entry, and there's still over a hundred dollars in her pocketbook, and the TV and the rest all untouched. It was somebody she was making tea for. – You with me? (*CP* 26)

Mr. Peters' Connections is set entirely in a dilapidated nightclub, which Centola sees as a purely symbolic choice as the nightclub represents the "interior consciousness" of Mr. Harry Peters' mind ("Possible"28). Regarding the setting of this play, Arthur Miller specifies in its *Penguin* preface "it should look like whatever the reader or producer imagines as a space where the living and the dead may meet, the gray or blue or blazing red terrain of the sleeping mind where imagination runs free" (viii). This description of the stage matches beautifully with the theme of the play where old Mr. Peters looks for the "subject" in the dusty old lanes of his memory. He, himself, feels like an "old, abandoned night club", trying hard to decipher a meaning of his existence.

> *A broken structure indicating an old, abandoned nightclub in New York City.A small, dusty upright piano, some chairs, a couple of tables, a few upended. Three chairs set close to the piano with instruments propped up on them—a bass, trumpet, saxophone . . .* (*CP* 401)

The concept of home is evidently missing in Miller's last stage play, *Finishing the Picture*, which takes place in a posh hotel in Nevada, where Kitty and her film crew are certainly not 'at home'. Kitty is an immobile, depressed woman in the play, unable to move out of bed to reach the sets to finish the picture. A sick, ailing human being deserves genuine care and love, and these are the very feelings missing in Kitty's surroundings in this expensive hotel. Kitty's life does not have any personal space; for being a movie star renders her marriage and divorce also as public concerns. People are constantly intruding her relatively personal space, that is her bedroom in this hotel, while she lies there drugged and paralysed. This is not how she would have been treated at her home, if she really had one.

Among Miller's later plays being discussed here, the only one with a purely domestic setting, away from public intrusion is *I Can't Remember Anything* as the entire conversation in this play is between two long-standing, ageing friends, Leo and Leonora, who meet in the former's living room-kitchen, in his New England home.

> *LEO's living room-kitchen in a nondescript little wooden house, on a country back road. A woodburning stove near a handmade plywood dining and drawing table; some canvas folding chairs, one of them repaired with needle and thread, a wicker chair, a couple of short benches, a well-worn modern chair and a lumpy couch – in short, a bachelor's heaven. A couple of fine dusty landscapes on one wall as well as tacked up photos and a few drunken line drawings of dead friends…* (*CP* 3)

Analysing Leo's living room is more like peeping into his own head. To others the time may be "now", but Leo's "now" is deeply connected to his "then" that he creates around him. With "line drawings" of old dead friends, Leo remains sheltered in his memories of the past. Even though it is a domestic setting, the play lacks the warmth one relates to home-life: Leonora, the woman who refuses to remember anything, is more like an uninvited house-guest in Leo's abode, at whom he is constantly annoyed. The two repetitively bicker at each other; even though ageing together, Leo-Leonora stand at two different ends of the rope— both distressed at the world changing just too fast.

Except for the little dance they dance together on a music record sent by Leonora's son, the audience fails to see any closeness between the two friends; their meeting and dinner end on a note of dryness and discord:

> LEO: That's my outside lamp for Christ's sake. Listen, maybe better stay here, but I've got to go to sleep and get up with a clear head; I promised Bokum I'd have it tomorrow.
> LEONORA: No-no, I'm going.
> LEO: Then go, will you? Goodnight. (20)

Miller's technique of drama is also very strongly based in his choice of costumes and props. The audience understands characters not only through dialogue and plot but also through various other minute dramatic inputs of the playwright: the costumes and stage props used in a play transport the undercurrents of the plot and characters to the audience in an artistic manner. For instance, in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot,* Estragon's "boots" are an integral part of his costume. According to Mick Wallis and Simon Shepherd, both costumes and props perform a "semiotic function" in any play (107). They are like cryptic messages flashed by the playwright that he expects his audience to decode and appreciate —to understand the minute characteristic traits of his characters. Thus, costumes and props are not merely parts of a play's scenic beauty or setting (107): they not only decide how a character will move on stage but also how the audience will perceive and feel that movement. Historically, the word "prop" stood for "properties" while the word costume denoted the "characteristic dress" of the country/period/class of the people

concerned (108), but with the various centuries through which dramatic art has travelled, the meanings and implications have evolved manifold.

In the selected plays, the costumes and props assigned by Miller to his characters convey concrete ideas regarding their major personality traits. Costumes, after all, are not just fabrics or adornments—they carry much higher imports.

> HYMAN: …I notice you're all in black. Can I ask you why?
> GELLBURG: I've worn black since high school.
> HYMAN: No particular reason.
> GELLBURG, *shrugs:* Always liked it, that's all. (*CP* 330)

In *Broken Glass*, Phillip Gellburg can be seen wearing only black clothes in all scenes of the play. Gellburg's choice of black clothes and of black colour in general is an indicator to the complications of his personality—the dark shadows on his life. In the first scene of the play, he sits at Dr. Hyman's clinic, wearing a *"black suit, black tie and shoes, and white shirt"* (321). "Well I always liked black for business reasons" (331), he says to Dr. Hyman, explaining his choice of black attire on all days. His clothes are also part of the mask that he has been wearing all his life as a Jewish-American man, trying to prove himself more "American" and less "Jewish". He also admits to Hyman that he always wanted to look "a little older"(331); Gellburg's "orthodox black", therefore, are not just his clothes but his constant attempt at assuming an air of seriousness and "authority" (Egerton, "Sick" 172). According to Abbotson, Phillip's appearance makes him look like he is "mourning for his own life": his completely black clothes and pale face symbolize "emptiness" (*Thematic* 151). Unfortunately, Sylvia Gellburg, his paralysed wife, has had to live under the dark shadows of his denial and reluctance. She is visibly aware of her husband's predominant choice of black in everything he buys or prefers:

> SYLVIA: But aren't they all black? —Dodges?
> GELLBURG: Not all. I've seen a couple of green ones.
> SYLVIA: You like green?
> GELLBURG: It's only a color. You'll get used to it . . . (*CP* 338)

The audience thus effortlessly understands that in *Broken Glass*, "black" is not just a colour. Much later in the play when Gellburg admits to Dr. Hyman, "there are some days I feel like going and sitting in the schul with the old men . . . and be a full-time Jew the rest of my life. With the side locks and the black hat, and settle it once and for all" (383), his struggles and dilemma— "to be or not to be a Jew", surface clearly in front of the audience.

Dr. Harry Hyman, on the other hand, *"a rather handsome man"* (323), emanates both sexual energy and friskiness through his routine habits of cigar-smoking and horse-riding. Hyman's riding clothes that work contrastingly to his medical profession and the traditional whites worn by health professionals, are again a cue dropped by the playwright for us to understand his character better. In Scene 3 of Act 1, Hyman emerges in his office donning his *"riding boots and a sweater"* (341), which is not how a general practitioner is usually visualised by the audience. Even when he calls on Sylvia at her house, he turns up in his riding attire; and Sylvia shows "*certain excitement*" seeing him thus (348). Hyman's basic nature, his playfulness, and his philandering appetite, appear to be struggling against the fundamental requirements of his professional and personal life. His interest in Sylvia is apparently not confined to his duties as her doctor: he is drawn to her sexually and emotionally.

> SYLVIA: Oh, doctor!
> HYMAN: I let myself in, hope I didn't scare you . . .
> SYLVIA: . . . You been riding?
> HYMAN: Yes. All the way down to Brighton Beach, nice long ride—I expected to see you jumping rope by now . . .
> SYLVIA, *strained laugh*: . . . You really love riding, don't you? (348)

Like Gellburg uses the blackness of his clothes to assume authority and seriousness, Hyman tries to undo the gravity and responsibility associated with his professional life by showing up in riding clothes—by making sure to ride every day, etc. Riding, to Hyman, is thus an escape from the mundane. His hobbies, his attire, and his manner of talking to Sylvia also give the audience a slight glimpse into the physician's youth: his days at New York University, when he took out a new girl each time and performed acrobatic stunts for the women on the beach.

> SYLVIA: . . . Harriet says you used to take out our cousin Roslyn Fein.
> HYMAN, *smiles, shrugs*: It's possible, I don't remember.
> SYLVIA: Well you had so many, didn't you.
> HYMAN: When I was younger.
> SYLVIA: Roslyn said you used to do acrobatics on the beach? And all the girls would stand around going crazy for you. (350)

In *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan,* Arthur Miller presents the two totally inversely natured "wives" of Lyman Felt's, to be donning identical fur coats. Theodora's "*beaver coat*" is placed right beside her when she is first seen on stage (208), waiting patiently to see her injured husband, and when the "*blondied hair",* Leah (210), is first seen by the

audience, she is wearing a fur coat too—a *"raccoon coat*" (210), to be specific. The identical fur coats of these women signpost the similar state of affairs in their lives: financially, Theo and Leah are certainly very comfortable because Lyman is said to have been "providing" enough to both families but in their personal lives, both are living a massive deception as "Mrs. Felt". This camaraderie of their clothing is in straight contrast to the otherwise apparent physical differences between the two women: while Theo is described as ageing, touching almost sixty, and somewhat "*ungainly*" in appearance (208), the thirty-year-old, Leah, donning "*high heels*" (210), exhibits sexuality and oomph.

However, Miller's audience cannot skip the fact that it is the same fur coat that exposes Theodora's bare thigh to everyone when in a state of shock, she drops her skirt somewhere in the hospital. Even when she gets the skirt back in her hands, Theo prefers dropping it to the floor again instead of getting into it (271)—indicating her reluctance to accept social norms any longer. At this moment of emotional collapse, Theo's "skirt" ceases to be a garment and attains a larger meaning; Theo adds that she can also say "fuck" (272). Adopting a vulgar vocabulary runs parallel to showing her bare legs to others—to shedding her old conservative inhibitions associated with first being a clergyman's daughter and then being a faithful wife for years altogether. Theodora Felt is shocked into believing that values and manners do not matter as they clearly incapable of bringing any good rewards to anyone. Her skirt is symbolic of her old values, especially of her upbringing in a religious household where she was raised to be "lady like", always.

In *Resurrection Blues*, Henri Schultz is seen wearing a "*cotton jacket*", teamed with a "*tweed cap*" (441). This is certainly not a random choice; the two garments donned by Henri display the contrast ingrained in his personality. Being excessively rich and authoritative in the country is the tweed wearing upper class while the "cotton" he brings on top of it symbolizes his attempts to bring sobriety and intellectual prowess in his appearance. He also wears a cap even when the environment is heated up because "most of the body's heat escapes through the scalp" (443). He says the cap has relieved him of many illnesses; even though not as apparent as it is in Felix's personality, we realise that even Henri is completely self-obsessed.

In the same play, Emily Shapiro, the ad film director especially flown in from America, is first seen wearing "*jeans and a zipper jacket, along with a baseball cap*" (453); the cap being the very symbol of Americanism here—since baseball is a very American game. Stanley, Ralph's stoned apostle in the play, is seen on stage wearing "*sneakers, unkempt, ponytail, blue denim shirt, backpack*" (469); everything about him points towards

his nomadic lifestyle and hippie attitude. On the other hand, Felix Barriaux's military uniform which should ideally symbolise discipline and justice, instead assumes a negative meaning in the play as the country's head works only for vested interests.

Cathy May and Kitty of *Mr. Peters' Connections* and *Finishing the Picture*, respectively, appear on stage adorning nothing but their "nudity" as they are women others know only as objects of pleasure. In both plays, these women fancied and exploited, appear in stark nakedness. After her nude appearance in the first scene, Kitty is not seen by the audiences until the end when she finally collapses. Cathy May after her first appearance in nudity, appears in "*a filmy dress*" (405), then in a "*middle-aged woman's coat and glasses*" (409), and finally, in a "*tight white miniskirt, transparent blouse"* (434) in the consecutive scenes of the play. But most significantly, Cathy is also seen wearing a "dog collar" (434), which is indicative of her restricted and chained existence. Her husband's misbehaviour towards her can easily be related to her wearing a "dog collar"; Larry demands "ownership of her" (Bigsby, *Critical* 413). Cathy has evidently been reduced to an animal by the men around her.

In the memory play, *I Can't Remember Anything,* Leo is painted on this canvas as a man whose clothes are nothing but scraps, showing how he prides himself in being a lifelong communist (*CP* 3). He finds satisfaction in his frugal means and living; Leo's rags are not only indicative of his revolt against commercialism but also of his desire to retain the past, in whatever torn and rugged form it is left in now (Abbotson, "Dangers" 128). Even though the old man is as worn out as his clothes, he still attempts to live energetically and productively. When Leonora emerges on the scene, the audience cannot help but notice the evident contrast between the two old friends. Her "*many coloured shawl*" (*CP* 3) is indicative of her "life-force"—the thing that Leo constantly strives for.

In *The Last Yankee,* Leroy Hamilton can be seen donning his "*subdued Ivy League jacket and slacks and shined brogans*" (283), which confuses John Frick, because the latter is used to judging people based only on their appearance. It is because of his clothes that the businessman confuses Leroy for a college man when he meets him at the mental institution.

> FRICK: I mean your whole . . . your way of dressing and everything.
> LEROY: Why? Just ordinary clothes.
> FRICK: No, you look like a college man.
> LEROY: Most of them have long hair, don't they?
> FRICK: The way college men used to look. I've spent thirty years around carpenters, that's why it surprised me . . . (288)

Even though Leroy Hamilton's clothes are in complete sync with his high-achieving, "intellectual" family line of learned men, they offer a contrast to his choice of profession and living.

In the same play, Karen's tap-dancing costume, her "*satin shorts, a tailcoat, a high hat and tap shoes*" (313) reflect the contrast between her ageing, depressed self and her suppressed desires to be a tap-dancing performer. Alas, her joys and excitement in life are beyond the comprehension of her business-suited, stiff husband.

In Beckett's *Waiting for Godot,* the stunted tree by which the two characters sit down and wait is certainly not there incidentally; it serves a purpose. The tree is the only indicator of time and space in the play, giving validity to the existence of the two tramps, Estragon and Vladimir. The tree also serves as a symbol of possibility—the possibility of suicide by hanging oneself to one of its branches. Stage props or objects placed on stage hold great significance in dramatic presentation.

In the selected plays, it can easily be observed that Miller makes an ingenious usage of various props to indicate the masking and unmasking practiced by his characters. When the "*lusty*" Margaret Hyman first appears on stage, she carries with herself her "*pruning shears*" (321), indicating her interest in gardening. On the other hand, her shears are also telling of the sharp and strident side of her personality; "that's one miserable little pisser" (332), she comments about Phillip, as soon as he leaves their house. Margaret's comments thus seem to be in complete sync with the prop allotted to her by the playwright, the "*shears*". The audience immediately understands Margaret to be a woman who would not mince words or be completely dominated by anyone. The philanderer in Hyman should watch out as his wife will not hesitate before cutting sharp and clipping any weed off.

In *The Last Yankee*, what the two men carry to the hospital to see their respective depressive-wives is also indicative of their basic personality traits. John Frick is certainly not a figure of love and romance for he carries a practical valise of clothes for Karen while Leroy, very unusually, carries the banjo to visit Patricia (Abbotson, *Critical* 217-8). But when the Hamiltons leave the hospital, both the practical (Patricia's bag) and the unconventional (Leroy's banjo) are carried together (*CP* 316), signifying the kind of balance needed to live healthy and happy lives.

In *Resurrection Blues,* when dictator Felix Barriaux is first seen by the audience, the chief of the state is "*seated at a window near his desk, studying a letter while filing his nails*" (441). Felix's nail file reflects his basic personality traits, which border heavily on

narcissism and egotism. Also, funnily, a dictator responsible for massive killings in the country, possesses but a small weapon—a "nail file". The audience sees Felix restudy the letter and kiss it saying, "*Oh, f*** all intellectuals!*" (441). The letter that he reads and rereads, thus immediately assumes value when he kisses it and stashes it in his "*inside pocket*" (441), almost like one would keep a love epistle that he received from his sweetheart. It is immediately known that this letter holds major importance in the play's main action: it is the offer letter for a worldwide televised crucifixion of Ralph, from an American advertising company.

In the same play, the scenic beauty that Emily and Skip appear to be imbibing in is disrupted in Act 1, Scene 2, when soldiers are seen carrying spades to stage, to build a crucifix while one soldier stands guard, holding a "*submachine gun and a chainsaw*" (456), which is clearly suggestive of the military rule and authority over common masses and the beautiful land of this country. The soldiers appear on the scene "*unpacking tools— an electric drill, bolts*" (456). One of the soldiers "*lays a beam across another*" and in a few moments, "*the gigantic cross is raised, dominating the stage*" (459). While the soldiers who place it halt to observe if they placed it at the right height, Skip and Emily also stop their conversation to look at the raised structure. Suddenly it is the "Cross" that overpowers the whole environment on the stage.

Arthur Miller's immaculate usage of props is definitely not confined to only objects that his characters use but also expands to food items they consume or talk about—or have placed around them on the stage. For instance, the purely sexual nature of the budding relationship between Felix and Emily in *Resurrection Blues* is reflected in how the two sit at a dinner table, *"sucking the lobster legs*" (481). While the two eat in silence, Felix's riflemen "*sit crouched*" with "*weapons at the ready*" (481) in his security, unmistakably conveying the worthlessness of Felix's life as the most powerful man in the country, whose romantic candlelit dinner is also not a private affair.

In *Broken Glass*, while Gellburg surprises his paralysed wife by bringing her the "pickles" that she relished years ago, Sylvia, even though surprised at the gesture, does not take any significant interest in Phillip's surprise treat (336). She keeps them away to be eaten later; the "sourness" associated with pickles has seeped into Gellburgs' lives.

Perhaps the most powerful images of the selected plays remain the stage props used by Miller to show the immobile, diseased, and corrupt modern lives. These include the "wheelchair", "newspapers", "bandages and casts", etc., that have been used quite effectively to show the paralysed and troubled state of human life. In *Broken Glass*, Sylvia

Gellburg is confined to a wheelchair, reading a newspaper "*with an intense, almost haunted interest, looking up now and then to visualize*" (334). Both stage props used here, the wheelchair and the newspaper, carry with them negative insinuations.

The newspapers can be viewed as a source of stress and tension in the characters' lives since it is through them that Sylvia receives all information about the Nazi persecutions. Her obsession with the newspapers is obvious right from her first appearance on stage: in between talking to Harriet, she constantly moves back to the newspapers (335). For people connected to Sylvia, the newspapers thus attain a negative meaning as they understand the papers to be causing damage to her body and mind, simply ignoring the damage they themselves are causing her:

> SYLVIA: But it's in the paper—they're smashing up the Jewish stores . . . Should I not read the paper? The streets are covered with broken glass!
> GELLBURG: Yes, but you don't have to be constantly . . .
> SYLVIA: It's ridiculous. I can't move my legs from reading a newspaper? (339)

In Act 2, Scene 2, even when she is enjoying some music on the radio, a folded newspaper lies on her bed (364), indicating her constant perusal of the news related to Nazi persecutions. And this is when she wears a perfume and sits with her hair done beautifully, waiting to receive Dr. Hyman. In Sylvia's life, the newspapers thus mark a pervasive presence.

In *I Can't Remember Anything* also, the newspapers do not have a very positive presence: Leonora sees them as carriers of bad news and corruption. When the audience first sees Leo, he comes across as a man intent at work; he "*is carefully lettering with a marker pen on a piece of cardboard, a newspaper is open at his elbow*" (3). Leonora expresses her frustration at the papers:

> LEONORA: There's nothing in the paper, is there?
> LEO: Yes, a few things.
> LEONORA: Well don't tell it to me, it's all too horrible.
> LEO: I wasn't going to tell it to you . . . (6)

Even when the two friends sit facing each other to eat the dinner laid out, Leo picks up his pencil to work on his crossword puzzle (8). The stage directions show Leo to be "*preoccupied*" when Leonora tries to make conversation with him (8). These props indicate the myriad distractions in characters' lives—that inhibit them from establishing real human connections.

In *Mr. Peters' Connections,* the old man, Mr. Peters, is also visibly irritated with the kind of advertisements used in newspapers:

> PETERS, *holds up his paper as though just discovering it in his hand*: . . . I found this on the train. Amazing ads; pages and pages . . . look: breast augmentation, $4,400. And guess how much breast reduction is.
> CALVIN: How much?
> PETERS: Same price. That seem strange to you? (414)

The modern day degeneration has been shown by Miller through the newspapers that Mr. Peters holds in his hands. In fact, in all the selected plays, the newspapers only appear as harbingers of evil and suffering.

Jeanine in *Resurrection Blues* is seen sitting alone on the stage, in a "wheelchair" with bandages all over her body (439). As highlighted earlier, like Sylvia, Jeanine is also a reflection of the malaise of her society. She is also a fallen woman in the play, much wronged against by her own people. During the play, Jeanine is seen progressing from a wheelchair to a cane; she can be seen limping in the final scenes of the play (486). Her regained movement shown through this stage prop is indicative of Ralph's impact in her life: his mysterious presence, in an oblique manner, has been able to help Jeanine's path to recovery. Through Jeanine's case, Arthur Miller perhaps wishes to convey to the audience that the solution to society's malaise, its immobility and paralysis can only be found in selfless love and devotion. Even though Jeanine is not completely cured through Ralph but his support has indeed given her some respite— and the same is possible for the human society.

In *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* also, we see casts and bandages playing a significantly symbolic role. The "cast" that bandages Lyman Felt's leg while the man lies helpless in a hospital bed, is an important prop used by the playwright. The "cast" here has been used intelligently to denote reality in the play: Lyman is out of the cast whenever he is hallucinating/day-dreaming/ enacting scenes from the past. Miller occasionally liberates Lyman from his physical injuries when "*slipping out from the rear of the cast, he moves into the clear*" (207). Indicative of the chaos Lyman has created for himself, the cast stays with him like his bandaged existence— it hurts and reminds him of the bones he has fractured and the hearts and homes he has broken. The audience sees him standing away from his cast at several moments in the play.

Even though Lyman Felt's dead father does not appear on stage (in some old versions of the play, he does), the black cloth that the father carries with him to cover Lyman is again an important prop (205). The shroud like cloth carried by the elder Lyman

is indicative of a doomed future for Lyman, and it also stands for Lyman's fear of the "approaching death" (Bigsby, *Critical* 378).

Sometimes, in absurd plays, even characters serve the function of "object" or "prop". These characters typically remain fixed on the stage, because they are immobile or physically incomplete. In the selected plays, Kitty and Cathy May seem to be perfect examples of "character objects". These women seem to be the most dramatically operative metaphors for the alienated human existence.

As with Arthur Miller's choice of costumes, props, stage settings, titles of plays, and names of characters, even the choice of music and dance for his plays is not a random choice: they are all individual segments of his artistic technique that contribute cohesively to the creation of his drama. Music has always remained an integral part of Miller's plays. When asked by Centola in an interview, "how does he find the right music to fit his intentions?", the playwright replied "it is just a sense of what sort of sound should fit into that situation". Almost all his plays, with a few exceptions, as highlighted by Jane K. Dominik in her article, "Music in Miller's Drama", have music merged into them. This "prolific and varied use of music" continues to be Miller's chief forte as a playwright (19). Dominik takes our attention to how even his early plays such as *They Too Arise, The Grass Still Grows,* and *The Half -Bridge* display the same pattern with music. Music evidently serves as a "metaphor for the structure and characters" in almost all of Miller's works (20), and just like he returns to similar themes and characters in his plays, he also returns to "music motifs" (22). "Moving from the page to the stage, music's role increases substantially" (26).

In *Timebends,* he tells his readers about how he grew up listening to music records brought by his mother; and when still not an established playwright, he sang on a radio program a couple of times. In another interview dated 1986, the playwright states, "when I started thinking about writing for the theatre, I thought of the play as a symphonic organism in the whole convention" (Lamos 281).

Music is central to Miller's dramatic presentation. Regarding the use of "cello" before every scene in *Broken Glass,* Miller says that the cello to him is a very "private instrument", a "soft instrument" (Centola, "Yankee" 84); the cellist playing a "*simple tune*" before every scene is symbolic of the sadness of the characters' lives. The background of the Holocaust is reflected through the sad and simple tunes played by the cellist. In fact, Miller plays beautifully with both light and music in this play: sometimes the music fades and sometimes the light does. In all scenes of Act 1, the cellist plays and then the light

goes down on him, but in Scene 1 of Act 2, the stage directions read "*the cellist plays, music fades away*" (*CP* 362), and this happens right before Phillip Gellburg's confrontation with Stanton Case, which eventually leads to his collapse. And then again, in scene 5 of the same act, the stage directions for the cellist read, "*the cellist plays, the music falls away*" (379), and this happens right before the play's climax when Phillip Gellburg becomes unconscious.

Miller's symbolic usage of music also extends to the lyrics and songs in his plays. Sylvia listens to *"If you knew Susie like I know Susie*" on the radio in Act 2, Scene 2 when Hyman comes to see her (364). Some research on this 1920s' bestseller written by B. G. De Sylva and Joseph Meyer, often "identified with Eddie Cantor, who performed it extensively" (Shaw, *Jazz* 160), helps us understand Miller's choice of this song for Sylvia: the girl in the song, "Susie", apparently, is not known to be a wild and passionate by the people around her but the singer claims that only he knows Susie. The girl he knows is very wild and fun-loving and not as "well-behaved" as she is perceived to be. Those who know the song's complete lyrics can relate Sylvia to Susie as she is also a woman living under the façade of a dutiful wife and mother while her heart is full of passion and energy. The song hints "the thrills that awaited one on a date with this unconventional lass" (168). Hyman and Sylvia indeed seem to be meeting each other on their very first dates.

> I have got a sweetie known as Susie
> . . . . . .
> Susie has a perfect reputation
> No one ever saw her on a spree
> . . . . . .
> Nobody knows but me
> . . . . . .
> There's none so classy As this fair lassie
> . . . . . .
> If you knew Susie, like I know Susie
> Oh! Oh! What a girl! (DeSylva and Meyer)

And while Sylvia enjoys this music, Hyman rejects it outright, saying that he prefers opera over these "crooners" (*CP* 364); Hyman appears to be a man of educated and refined tastes. He has certainly been exposed to finer music and art when he went to Germany to complete his medical studies; Sylvia could not attend university.

In *The Last Yankee* also, music is integral to the play even though the play is set in a public mental institution. Leroy carries a "banjo" to the hospital; he loves its "clean" and

"uncluttered" sound, which is also exactly how Leroy wants to lead his life, however, that's a fairly impractical expectation (Abbotson, *Critical* 221).

John Frick brings Karen her tap-dancing costume and shoes as demanded by her but he is clearly not interested in her hobby. When Karen asks him to sing "Swanee River", he sings too fast for her to catch up. Karen finds in tap-dancing a "sanctuary" (Gussow, *NY Times*); "it is only when she dons her costume and tap dances to the tune of "Swanee", Florida's official state song, that we see a liveliness in her otherwise very nervous and fragile self.

> Way down upon the Swanee River,
> Far, far away,
> There's where my heart is turning ever,
> There's where the old folks stay.
> All up and down the whole creation,
> Sadly I roam . . . (Foster)

It is evident that this old, depressed woman wants her husband to be a part of her rejuvenation through music and dance. When Frick reluctantly sings the song which arouses "nostalgic longing for family", he remains unaware of Karen's similar longings (Abbotson, "Reconnecting" 63). By singing too fast, getting angry, and leaving midway, Frick stops Karen from releasing herself, pushing her into the same old depression and sadness. On the other hand, Leroy, a complete stranger to Karen, plays the banjo for her to dance, but, now Karen cannot continue—it is her husband she needs. According to Osterwalder, Karen's tap-dance has a "lunatic touch" to itself (324): when she dances, it is almost like she is fighting against the restrictions imposed on her by her dominating husband.

In the selected works, Miller also shows music as a reuniting force; which is quite evident in *I Can't Remember Anything.* Leo and Leonora share a moment of fun, youthfulness, and physical vibrancy when the latter plays the record sent by her musician son:

> LEO *(he is pleasantly surprised)*: Chrissake that's nothing but a Samba . . . (*He moves his shoulders to the beat.*) Sure, it's just a plain old fashion Samba, for Christ's sake. *She begins to move to it. She is remarkably nimble, taking little expert steps . . . and her sensuality provokes and embarrasses him, making him laugh tightly . . . She lets herself into the dance fully now, and he lets his laughter flower, and laughing.* (*CP* 18-19)

This is also probably the only moment in the play when Leo and Leonora appear to be on the same page, and don't bicker at each other.

In *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*, Lyman Felt can be heard humming a song in his state of delirium. "I'm just breezin' along with the breeze", Lyman hums and whistles (206). He listens to music that is not actually playing in the hospital, surprising Nurse Logan. And this is again a very appropriate choice of song—another popular hit of the 1920s whose lyrics read as follows:

> I have been a rover since I was a child
> No one to love or care for me
> Knocked around all over, kinda grew up wild
> My home's wherever I may be
> Ain't no someone yearnin', wonderin' where I be
> I'm gone, but no one's missin' me
> Ain't no light a-burnin' ev'ry night for me I'm like a bird that's flyin' free
> . . . . . .
> The sky is the only roof I have over my head
> . . . . . .
> I'm just goin' along as I please
> Breezin' along with the breeze (Whiting & Sinons)

The adjectives, "rover", "wild", "free bird", indeed define Lyman Felt's bigamist life; he is certainly facing the repercussions of his loose morality and there is going to be nobody to "miss" him, as the song reads. There will not be anyone waiting for him or be burning the "light" for him.

In *Clara,* music records are discovered in the murdered girl's room. While Lew Fine carries on with his interrogation of Mr. Kroll, "*a loud saxophone – John Coltrane – splits the air*" (*CP* 23). As one of the records plays Kroll's own voice recorded years ago when he played the soloist, Kroll's expression changes.

> KROLL: . . . That record has got to be at least twenty-five . . .
> *A chorale: 'Shenandoah'.A chorale: 'Shenandoah'. KROLL's voice, young and strong, solos in the foreground . . .*
> (*Hearing his own voice*)*:* Good Lord.
> *KROLL is listening, staring front.* (45)

Kroll sees Clara dressed as a school girl with ribbons in her hair (45)—in a way, this music seems potent enough to bring his daughter back from the dead. The music continues in the background; "Shenandoah", a traditional American song of unknown origin is played, and it inspires Kroll to narrate the experience of his heroism—the lynching episode that his

younger self took great pride in. After a long narration, the father is finally able to recollect and expose the name of Clara's murderer.

Music, indeed is vital to Miller's drama. The title of *Resurrection Blues* clearly echoes the playwright's "love of music", of his love for the old "jazz and blues" of the twentieth century America (Dominik 21). The character who works as Ralph's "mouthpiece" in the play, Stanley, sits in Felix's office, softly playing a "harmonica" when he is first seen on stage (*CP* 469). Later when Emily Shapiro and Felix sit down to a meal of lobsters and wine, the stage directions read, "*music; very distant strains of a guitar and singers serenading*" (481). Maybe not with music, but the audience sees the head of the nation "serenading" the American woman; he tries to convince her to court him and marry him. In the final scene of the play, Charlie/ Ralph/ Jack marks his presence with "*a music very distant, subliminal*" (495).

In *Mr. Peters' Connections*, "*a bass, trumpet, and saxophone*" (401) lie uncared for in the dilapidated night club where the play's entire action takes place. These musical instruments emanate a kind of "silent jazz" of an era long-gone (Dominik 25): they are the remnants of times in which Mr. Peters enjoyed his youth and accomplishments as a former Pan Am pilot. In the current scenario, both these instruments and old Mr. Peters are not of much value to people. In the English version of the play, Mr. Peters goes to the piano, plays the first five notes of the "September Song", which is again an old American pop hit of the late 1930s—basically an old man's lament for the loss of youth and quick passage of time. "*A tinkling of Mozart is heard*" even when Cathy May comes near Mr. Peters, reminding him of the lost romantic times with her (*CP* 403). In another scene, "*they dance close, the music speeds*" (409); Cathy May again disappears into darkness. She may be the music of his life but this music faded away with the beautiful woman.

Later in the play, Leonard and Rose enter the nightclub and the former carries with him a guitar (416); Leonard is a guitarist by profession. Amid conversation between Rose and Peters, "*the trumpet plays a loud blast of My Blue Heaven*" (420), which makes the old man very anxious. *My Blue Heaven,* again being an old classic, fits the subject here, as Mr. Peters day is also ending.

> Day is ending, birds are wending
> Back to the shelter of
> Each little nest they love
> . . . . . .
> What makes the World go round
> Nothing but love

. . . . . (Donaldson & Whiting)

And when Rose is revealed to be Mr. Peters' daughter, he realises that the "subject" he has been looking for is indeed "love".

A closer look at Miller's stage directions will help one understand that they are also strongly indicative of other important details such as the mannerisms adopted by the characters while speaking, listening, and reacting. For instance, when Margaret Hyman sees the gloomy Phillip Gellburg waiting for her husband in his office, she asks him for tea but he replies with a "*faint reprimand*" (*CP* 321), reminding her how her husband is late for the appointment. Here Miller's indication for Gellburg's tone becomes the guidebook to understand his overall attitude towards people. Further, the stage directions indicate Phillip to be "*attempting easy familiarity*" to speak to her, but, when Margaret tells him that he never replied to her nods on the street, he is suddenly filled with a sense of "*amused loftiness*" (321), indicating how he likes to assume importance in front of people.

Likewise, the playwright's directions regarding the facial expressions of various characters are also very helpful in understanding their basic characteristic traits and attitudes. Margaret Hyman's "*burst of laughter*" (321), appears to be in direct contrast with Phillip's "*purse-mouthed smile*" (323). Even before the audience becomes aware about the real cause of Sylvia's paralysis, Gellburg's body language gives away that he is somewhere guilty of hurting her; which is why, while speaking to Hyman, "*he shifts uneasily*" (328) or gets "*flushed*" each time. He shrugs "*hostilely*" when Hyman asks him if Sylvia is satisfied with their sexual relations (329); even though Gellburg says that he is not embarrassed by these personal questions (328), his expressions clearly show that he is lying. Later when Phillip finally has a conversation about the same with Sylvia, "*he evades her eyes*" (340), significantly exposing his guilt and embarrassment at the situation. The irony and hate in Sylvia's tone are so strident that Phillip "*moves about*" as she speaks (341), trying hard to escape.

The attraction between Sylvia and Hyman is indicated mostly through their mannerisms as indicated in the stage directions. When he calls on her for her regular check-up, the excitement between the two is quite evident: sitting at her bedside, he removes the covers from her body and "*then raises her nightgown*" (349). Sylvia inhales "*with a certain anticipation as he does so*" (349). After examining her toes, Hyman "*rests a palm on her leg*" instead of removing himself from this close physical proximity (349). When Hyman calls her "attractive", Sylvia is "*deeply excited*"; she *"glances away shyly*" (349), almost as if it is not her physician but her lover complimenting her. Yet, when Hyman begins to

talk to her about Phillip and the Nazis, Sylvia "*shakes her head*" and "*presses her ears*" (351), each time finding comfort in touching and feeling Hyman's hand.

In *I Can't Remember Anything,* even though Leonora constantly forces herself to be detached from everyone and everything, her body language and mannerisms, as pointed in the stage directions, strongly imply the contrary. On reading her son, Lawrence's letter, the old woman's "*eyes moisten*" but she blinks away the tears (11), reluctant to acknowledge her feelings for her son. Likewise, when Leo reminds her of her dead husband's birthday, there is a "*faint guilt*" in Leonora's eyes for not being able to remember it herself (12). In fact, a "*tension*" grows in her each time she is actually able to remember anything (16).

In *Clara*, contradicting Kroll's lifelong pretence as a "liberal", there is a "*slight hesitation*" when he says the word "Hispanic" (33)—clearly pinpointing his discomfort with the subject of "race", his duplicity and hypocrisies.

In *The Last Yankee*, while Karen and Patricia talk to each other, Patricia "*studies her watch*" thrice (293-4-7), indicating her nervousness and her dilemma regarding whether she should go home with Leroy or stay back at the mental institution. Patricia's hands constantly shake out of fear and nervousness (297). Even though she tells Karen that she feels she should not be blaming Leroy anymore, when she speaks of their inability to get rid of their old Chevrolet, there is "*a surge of deep anger*" in her (296). There is an "*inner excitement*" in Patricia when Karen asks for recommendations for places to shop (298)—which sums up her fatal attraction to money and materialistic pleasures. The blank, sick, and forgetful Karen "*holds up five fingers, bends one at a time*" to remember the shopping places that Patricia tells her about (298).

When Leroy finally comes in to see Patricia, the affection between the two is heart-warming; she draws his head down and strokes his cheek *(*301). The stage directions suggest that in Patricia there is "*a softness despite her language*" (302). She can be seen touching Leroy with affection; she "*draws him down, kisses him*" (302). Their body language indicates the scope that the couple still have despite their evident misgivings and Patricia's clinical depression. Their conversation does surface a lot of negative emotions and past misgivings also, but the love between the Hamiltons cannot be denied. On the other hand, the stage directions clearly specify the lack of hope in the relationship between the Fricks: John Frick constantly overrides his wife when she makes any attempt to strike a conversation. Karen is "*deeply embarrassed*" when Frick makes her feel small for her tap-dancing and her costume, which he feels are rather too "silly" at her age (311).

Another very important part of dramatic presentation, the "spotlight" functions generally as a representation of the drama itself. Miller's technique is also specialised in his usage of "light" and "darkness" on the dramatic stage—which often works symbolically. For instance, the playwright manages to play beautifully with light right from the prologue of *Resurrection Blues*: when light finds Jeanine as she is seated on a "*dark stage*" (440). As she introduces the various characters of the play, the light flashes on them one by one. When she talks about her gang of revolutionaries who were killed by the dictator's men, "*light finds nothing*" (440) and when she talks about the mysterious presence of Ralph, the light brightens but there is no one being lit by it. Jeanine then "*rolls into darkness*" (440). The last light brightens even further, widening its reach until it fully covers the stage" (439-40). Then onwards, the character of Ralph is symbolized throughout the play by a bright light. In another scene, when Felix's men peer into the cell where they have captured Ralph, "*a blinding white light pours through the doorway*" (452), signifying Ralph's powers over common masses. When the dictator threatens to kill Stanley, the blinding white light reappears to help his apostle (474): Felix is forced to shield his eyes against the sharpness of this light. In the last scene of the play, all characters encounter the "light" when they are huddled together at Jeanine's house. The "*light brightens sharply*" (495), but, even though everyone looks up at the light and talk to it to help their lives, it light fades away (498), signifying Ralph's mysterious exit.

In Act 3 of *Finishing the Picture*, we yet again realise Miller's symbolic usage of the spotlight. Kitty's "*motionless form*" is seen covered with a blanket (535); each time, the door of her bedroom is opened, light pours in, but each time Edna has to get up to shut the door. "The light disturbs her", Edna says explaining (536); evidently, Kitty's life is full of darkness. The photographer, Case, carries a small flashlight with which he checks Kitty's eyes in the complete darkness of her bedroom (436); there can be a scrutiny/investigation by external agents but the real light of the day stays away from the deteriorating Kitty.

In *Clara*, it is the "*reflection of a camera flash*" which briefly lights up the stage as photographers are clicking pictures of the murder scene (24). Like Cathy May in *Mr. Peters' Connections*, Clara keeps being lit on stage, seen only by her father, always quickly dissolving into darkness—both women now just a part of memory. In the end, even the name of Clara's murderer, Luis Hernandez, flashes in front of Kroll through the medium of a light flash (34).

"Language is as much a means to deceive, to deny, as to communicate" (Bigsby, *Critical* 20); and language indeed occupies a central place in Miller's drama. "It's all about

the language", Miller once expressed in an interview (qtd in Bigsby, *Arthur Miller* 155); yet, the language employed in his plays is perhaps one extremely neglected aspect of the playwright's technique of dramatic representation. In his doctoral dissertation, *Arthur Miller's Language: The Poetic in the Colloquial*, Stephen A. Marino defends Miller against critics such as John Simon, who, in his *New York Times* review of *Broken Glass*, dismissed the playwright, saying:

> Arthur Miller may be the world's most overrated playwright, but even he could not have served up the jagged shards of *Broken Glass* without some hidden agenda, some secret scenario under the banal plot and shoddy dialogue . . .. Miller's ultimate failure is his language: Tone-deafness in a playwright is only a shade less bad than in a composer. (80-81)

In a similar fashion, in his review article published in 2009, Terry Teachout pinpoints Arthur Miller's "mistake of using florid, pseudo-poetic language" in his works ("Concurring"). Marino on the other hand believes that the playwright has not been fairly acknowledged as a "language stylist" of the world of drama, emphasising on how Miller's whole writing career has been "overshadowed" by Tennessee Williams, who is well-known for the poetic touches of his dramatic composition (*Poetic* 4). He also feels that Miller's reputation as a "social dramatist" often negatively interferes a fuller analysis of his language and style. To understand and celebrate Arthur Miller as a playwright, it is essential to analyse how he employs the "colloquialisms, clichés, and idioms" of the common man's everyday vocabulary and yet never deprive the dialogue of its poetic beauty (6). The poetic elements of his dramatic language are some direct pointers to the social themes the playwright addresses through his plays (15). Miller certainly deserves to be given credit for inventing his own "unique dramatic idiom" for almost all his plays are replete with "poetic elements (Marino, "Language" 35). He, in fact, successfully manages to use the common man's language in such a way that it appears well-established as "poetic language" in his plays (35).

In "Arthur Miller and the Common Man's Language", Leonard Moss also asserts similar opinions, highlighting how thorough discussions that can be had on the poetic elements of Miller's playwriting are often discounted because he is often only seen as a "social dramatist". Miller uses the common man's "slangy syntax" for his "dramatic purposes" (Moss 52), which is how the language reflects the social concerns of his characters (52). Moss believes that Miller's various "experiments with American dialects", even though "imperfect" at times, succeed at offering enough intrigue to his audience (57).

To exemplify, Moss draws attention to how the "hackneyed keywords" Willy Loman uses in *Death of a Salesman* point sharply towards the protagonist's "business ethic" (55).

Talking generally about American drama and specifically about Arthur Miller as a playwright, John Prudhoe in "Arthur Miller and the Tradition of Tragedy", states that modern dramatic realism's major challenge lies in presenting life on stage as it is lived in modern day societies (430). This pre-requisite makes it imperative for the playwright to present "real life" on stage through the medium of "speech" (430). And since Arthur Miller has been dedicated to writing tragedies of the "common man", he has often had to give dialogue to his characters that sound like their own— for Miller has been keenly aware of the fact that "poetry cannot be imposed on drama" (436). In justifying his choice of dramatic language, Prudhoe goes to the extent of saying that there is no other playwright in the modern world who is "more aware than Miller of the inarticulateness of the modern man" (438).

As one of the few exceptions in the Miller canon, the language employed in his play, *The Crucible*, reflects "precision, authority, and beauty of style" because it is set in a society which has "stabilized beliefs" and "stabilized language", which are essentially not the realities of our modern societies (438). According to John Prudhoe, it needs to be understood that if Miller's plays sometimes appear weak in their "power in the dialogue", it is not usually a flaw of his playwriting but of the time and environment in which he crafts his plays. The American playwright writes in and about societies that display a major lack of "established and available idiom" (Oberg 304). Miller's early plays are filled with his poetic touches, with some passages entirely in verse. Some of his most popular plays such as *A View from the Bridge* and *Death of a Salesman* were at first written completely in verse and later broken down into dramatic prose. Therefore, while analysing the selected later plays, it is imperative we pay attention to the various poetic elements of his language.

In *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan,* the protagonist, Lyman Felt reflects a life of dualistic tensions: poet versus insurance tycoon, philosopher versus the materialist, and bigamist versus the conventional family man. Arthur Miller displays recurrent "patterns and motifs of images, objects, and language" in most of his writing (Marino, "Greatest Cars" 2). To present Lyman Felt as a man having "travelled many roads", the playwright uses the "road of life" motif in the play by constantly bringing to conversation various vehicles of speed such as the Porsche the bigamist crashed on the road down Mount Morgan; Lyman's Porsche can thus be seen as both an "agent of destruction and liberation" (16). Miller successfully employs the "euphemism" for Lyman's fatal car accident that

finally stops the bigamist's "wild ride" (16). Through these linguistic images, the playwright wants us to focus on how his protagonist has always been a rider—both literally and figuratively; therefore, the text is replete with metaphors specific to "travel and transportation—driving, riding, skiing, flying, walking, racing, hunting" (17).

"Theo? —hi, darling, I'm just about to take off" (*CP* 232), Lyman phones and informs his first wife, Theodora after he has had his first sexual encounter with Leah. Bubbling with a new sexual energy, Lyman now finds it easier to shower his affection on his "boring" old wife too: "how about you flying up here and we rent a car and drive through the Cherry Valley—it's all bursting into bloom now!" (232), he says to her, now completely flowing with happiness and movement he had been wanting. Even though Theodora still believes that Lyman has "always been terrified of speed", "speed" has indeed been her husband's way of life.

> LYMAN: Some day I'm going to swipe an image you never heard of! . . . Listen, I hitched a ride down with this pilot in his new Cessna— I have meetings up there starting seven thirty tomorrow but I just had to astonish you.
> THEO: You flew in a small plane at night?
> LYMAN: That whole fear was guilt, Theo—I thought I deserved to crash. But I deserve to live because I am not a bad guy and I love you. (266)

Paying attention to how Lyman invites Leah to her wedding would perhaps clarify the metaphor further: "I feel you flowing round me like I'm a rock in the river. —I have a car and driver downstairs; come to your wedding, Leah my darling!" (216). When it comes to fathering a son with her, he again baits the woman by offering her "movement": "I would drive him to school in the mornings, take him to ballgames" (221). And later, in another flashback scene, we see Leah confess to him that one of the most "sensuous things" about Lyman was that he let her relax and never put her in the driving seat like her parents did (222).

Through both his literal and figurative movement, the bigamist has been absconding from reality and dodging "moral consequences" of his selfish actions (Marino "Greatest Cars" 17).

> LYMAN: You're not understanding me, I'm not blaming you. I got dressed and back in the car to . . . feel something again. 'Cause it had all died in me, Leah— this whole ten-year commute was just . . . ludicrous! I was a corpse buried in that room . . ..
> LEAH, *covering her face, weeping*: Oh God, Lyman . . .
> LYMAN: I got back in the car to stop the dying. So I know the kind of suffering you're feeling now. *Looks at all of them.* It's far too late, but I swear I've never felt

the love for you that's in me now. *On the verge of collapse*: And thank God for that. (*CP* 276)

Both his families are forced to abandon him in the end; and also his injuries deprive him of his mobility and speed.

As in *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*, it is imagery and metaphors connected with high speed and constant movement, in *Broken Glass*, it is the broken pieces of glass that Miller's language constantly draws our attention to. It is the old man wearing "exact glasses with the wire frames" as Sylvia's grandfather wore (335) that fixes her attention to the persecuted Jewish old men in Germany; the brokenness of people miles away from the Jewish-American housewife thus becomes her personal problem because Sylvia can feel one with them in their misery. "Should I not read the paper? The streets are covered with broken glass!" (339), she says exasperated to her husband, unable to raise the alarm she wants raised in everyone around her.

Even Margaret Hyman, as mentioned earlier, calls her husband a "pane of glass" (360); while Margaret here implies her ability to see through what Hyman is thinking, especially with reference to his involvement with Sylvia's case, the image of glass draws the audience's attention to Hyman's state of brokenness, which may not be as apparent to other characters in the play. In fact, the image of "broken glass" is very integral to Miller's last stage play, *Finishing the Picture* also. Derek Clemson, the director of Kitty's film, says about her to Ochsner, "she has had a frightful life . . . she has been stepping on broken glass since she could walk" (513). The imagery of broken glass is thus repeatedly used by Miller to imply human brokenness and painful realities.

Another pattern of imagery shared by the two plays is the metaphor of 'horses'. As Marino highlights, in *Broken Glass*, Dr. Hyman's horse riding skills are directly related to his sexual potency (*Poetic* 8). He has been taking girls out since he was a young man and both Sylvia and Harriet have memories of him being a great lover to women. His riding clothes and his horse thus become symbols of sexual prowess; yet, he is fixated on a woman hysterically paralysed. Thus, seeing "horse" as a powerful sexual metaphor used by Miller, it becomes easier to understand things he implies rather obliquely:

MARGARET: . . . new union's pulled a strike, imagine? A strike in a hospital? It's incredible. And his horse went lame.
GELLBURG: His horse?
MARGARET: He rides on Ocean Parkway every afternoon.

> GELLBURG, *attempting easy familiarity*: Oh yes, I heard about that . . . it's very nice. You're Mrs. Hyman? (*CP* 321)

The mention of a "lame horse" at the play's start prefigures both Hyman's sexual energy and Sylvia's paralysed state. When Margaret expresses anger and doubt, it is a "white horse" that Hyman makes her imagine—on which the couple would ride together (333). On the topic of horses and how it is unlikely for a Jew to be riding them, Hyman later tells Phillip that his grandfather was a horse dealer in Odessa, and that his cousins are "still in the business—they break horses" (381).

In *Finishing the Picture*, Case constantly makes horse-references to Kitty and to film stars in general, obviously underlining their "sexual" force. Talking about Kitty's uncertain moods and the stuck up film schedule, he says: "it's like the wranglers say about horses—nobody knows what a horse is going to do next because the horse don't know" (515).

> CASE: . . . This is America! —The girl's got to glory in her flesh again! (*To Derek.*) Christ, remember years ago—she could knock around all night, bounce onto the set straight from some party and her face shining like a brand new apple . . . Remember, Derek?
> DEREK: Yes, yes. She had one dress and the constitution of a horse. —Which she still has if she could only . . . (523)

In *The Last Yankee*, we encounter a beautiful usage of "wood imagery" that directly reflects the concerns Miller wishes to address through the play. By pitching against each other the two central male characters, John Frick and Leroy Hamilton, the play focuses on America's shift from manual labour to a profit-driven industrial economy, where human beings are constantly replaced by machines. Carlos Campo in his article, "Damn Yankee! Leroy Hamilton Crafts Wood with Passion and Honesty . . .", highlights how like the other characters of Miller's earlier plays, such as John Proctor, Willy Loman, and Chris Keller, Leroy Hamilton finds his true self in the natural landscape ("Yankee" 89). In the play, the character of Leroy Hamilton, the modern day American carpenter, has been portrayed as an embodiment of the "nation's colonial past—to wood and nature" (90). Patricia also compares herself and Leroy to two wooden logs that keep bumping against each other to speak of the incoherence of their marital union (*CP* 304).

In *Mr. Peters' Connections*, it is "shoes" that we see as an important image—certainly pointing towards the need for a stable ground under one's feet. Susan Abbotson highlights how Mr. Peters' purchase of shoes significantly implies his "acceptance" of

reality—of being "grounded" despite his desire for flight, which he could earlier enjoy as a pilot (*Critical* 249).

> PETERS: I didn't produce these shoes out of thin air, correct? Look at the soles . . . not even soiled. *Leonard looks at soles, but almost de-animatedly, totally uninterested.* And I couldn't have bought them in my sleep, could I. You walk into a store with your eyes closed they're not going to let you walk out with a new pair of shoes . . . What's begun to haunt me is that next to nothing I have believed has turned out to be true. (*CP* 423)

There is certainly a strain of man's powerlessness in front of his fate in how Harry Peters says to his wife: "when I woke up this morning, I did not plan to shop for shoes" (429). The old, dying man is not planning stability or life on earth; he is just awaiting his end.

The image of shoes is central to the message Miller wishes to give through *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* also; it is an integral part of the play's ending:

> LYMAN: . . . When you're out there fishing on the ice with your husband and your boy . . . what do you talk about?
> NURSE: Well, let's see . . . this last time we all bought us some shoes at that big Knapp Shoe Outlet up there? They're seconds, but you can't tell them from new.
> LYMAN: So you talked about your new shoes?
> NURSE: Well, they're great buys.
> LYMAN: Right. That . . . that's just wonderful to do that. I don't know why, but it just is. (277)

The mental picture one draws of the Logan family sitting by a lake, talking peacefully about nothing but "shoes" reflects their stability, a comfortable support and footing, and their grounded identities as a family, which for a bigamist like Lyman Felt is indeed a "miracle".

In *Broken Glass,* however, shoes attain negative insinuations. Sylvia Gellburg despairingly says to Phillip that she "took better care" of her "shoes" (373), indicating how she bargained her happiness and independent movement to stay "grounded" and "fixed". On the other hand, the "heavy shoes" that she hears pounding on the pavement in her nightmares represent Nazi authority and encroachment. Even though Hyman's riding attire and his "boots" are symbolic of his youthful energy, on Phillip, they only bear a negative impact:

> GELLBURG: Never mind . . . since you started coming around . . . in those boots . . . like some kind of horseback rider . . .?
> HYMAN: What the hell are you talking about!
> GELLBURG: Since you came around she looks down at me like a miserable piece of shit!

HYMAN: Phillip . . .
GELLBURG: Don't "Phillip" me, just stop it! (382-3)

Another very prominent image in *Mr. Peters' Connections* is that of the "powder room", which all characters of the play keep referring to as the most perfect place. According to Susan Abbotson, the much mentioned powder-room "might represent a positive feminine force in the play, though a force against which the men remain wary" (*Critical* 249). In his performance review of the play, Philip C. Kolin also calls the women's "powder room" as "terra incognita" for Mr. Peters and "heaven" for his wife, Charlotte (163). Throughout the play, there are multiple references to the "powder room"—making it impossible for the audience to not form a picture of the mysterious ladies' room in their heads.

PETERS: . . . —what about this powder room, why are women so crazy about it? . . . I'm enjoying this, but what is the subject?
CALVIN: Women love to redecorate.
PETERS: Oh, of course, yes. A man will never notice the paint floating off the ceiling onto his head, but a woman can count dust. —You always have an answer, don't you. (*CP* 403)

Later, Peters says to Calvin that "maybe the time has come to forget this powder room" (408), forcing us to wonder if the old man implies the material world of flesh, glamour, and oomph through the powder room. Though completely unheard, Adele adds, "those toilet seats are solid African mahogany . . . the imprint of woman's flesh on solid mahogany can never be entirely washed away" (408). In an interview given to Steven Centola, Miller explains the "powder room" in the following words—yet still leaving gaps for the audience to completely grasp its significance in the play:

The powder room is the place where women band together. It is their cave, where they live, and it's full of all kinds of contradictory impulses. It's where they go to relax, to be themselves and show themselves. Yet there's also something obscurely deadly about it. . .. The implication is that the women are in touch with some primordial water that's in that powder room, and the men are fooling around outside completely bewildered. (*Michigan Quarterly*)

In his book *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud argues that civilization is impossible without considerable repression of the instincts, yet, such repression only leads to a considerable neurosis especially cultural neuroses such as religious and political wars. Belongingness to community and society come at a price; the natural human instincts when suppressed so much leave one with "anxiety" and "discontent". "When an instinctual trend

undergoes repression, its libidinal elements are turned into symptoms, and its aggressive components into a sense of guilt" (Freud 139). The language of *Resurrection Blues* is replete with terminology that points towards the evident "repression" of all the characters involved. According to Neil Carson, the play is about "resurrection to the extent that it deals with the revival of suppressed and transmuted feelings" (141). The play's language directly establishes the image of repression; for instance, Felix Barriaux's erectile dysfunction, that he expresses quite freely in his conversation also points towards repression. His material desires and political corruption have led him to suppress himself emotionally—leading to suppression of his sexual self also. He feels that an American woman will help him attain his "resurrection" or rebirth, which is why he is quickly attracted to Emily Shapiro.

> HENRI: . . . You don't say. Maybe you have the wrong woman.
> FELIX: They can't all be wrong. My dog just won't hunt.
> HENRI: Imagine. And analysis helps?
> FELIX, *hesitates:* Semi. I'm trying to keep from letting it obsess me . . . (*CP* 446)

Likewise, Henri has been escaping reality through his big ideological jargon; he has been "sacrificing his real emotions for the pseudo feelings of politics and art" (Carson 141). Jeanine has been escaping reality first through drugs and then through the indeterminate presence of the proclaimed messiah. The imagery throughout the play points towards the possible "rebirth" and the remaining "blues".

Miller's plays are also known for their lengthy speeches. Jeanine's prologue throws light on her personal situation and the state of affairs in her country. In fact, it through Jeanine that Miller delivers his "most damning commentary" on the corrupt mass media and the rampant materialism of the American nation (Rudolph 548).

Miller's plays demonstrate his constant attempts to "find speech that springs naturally out of the characters and their backgrounds rather than imposing a general style" (*CE* 525). While Henri's terminology is mostly ideological and often impractical, Felix's reflects his materialism and unthoughtful ways. Stanley, the stoned hippie, delivers his dialogues with a vocabulary that is most becoming of a non-conformist like himself.

> STANLEY: To see a man tortured for their sake . . . you know . . . that a man could actually like care that much about anything . . .
> FELIX: You're telling me something . . . what are you telling me? —Does he want it or not?
> STANLEY: Oh no! No. It's just that . . . you see—*Rapidly overwhelmed by the vision's horror.* —he gets to where he just can't like bear it—

FELIX: Bear what!
STANLEY: Well . . . the horror! (*CP* 473)

In the end when everyone is seeing Charlie off, Stanley says: Always love you, baby. . . a cup of tea, or a glass of dry white, don't hesitate, okay? . . ." (499).

In the selected plays, we also encounter what Miller himself termed as a "loss of syntax" in his essay "About Theatre Language".

> It was a speech skewed almost out of recognition by a surreal commitment to what at first had seemed to be the impotence of human hopes, and hence the futility of action itself. All but the flimsiest connections between speeches were eliminated, creating an atmosphere of sinister danger (in Pinter) or immanence (in Beckett). It was quite as though the emphatic absence of purpose in the characters had created a loss of syntax. (*CE* 524)

Miller, in this essay, refers to the verbal exchange between Leroy Hamilton and John Frick as "a conversation bordering on the absurd" (526). The words do not really mean anything here but still the play's theme hits "like a nail drawn across a pane of glass" (360).

FRICK: Tremendous parking space down there. 'They need that for?
LEROY: Well a lot of people visit on weekends. Fills up pretty much.
FRICK: Really? That whole area?
LEROY: Pretty much.
FRICK: 'Doubt that. (*CP* 283)

His "lost syntax" is characterized by characters' confused speech—babblings and rantings where the complete meaning of dialogue is reduced, which again is one of the primary features of plays of the absurdist style (Marino, "Absurdity" 117). The playwright also underlines how he uses a distinct language for each play and frequently shifts styles according to the "nature" of his play's theme and subject. Even though the conversation between the depressives' husbands appears mundane, it conveys both the social and psychological contexts of the situation.

Likewise, even the exchange between the depressives leads to no meaning, yet, the subject is clear. It starts with the need to talk and then moves towards the realization that "talk" is not helping:

PATRICIA: Why are we doing this? Come let's talk, I hate these games . . . I said I'm quitting . . .
KAREN: My sister-in-law taught me. She used to be a stewardess on the Queen Mary. She could even play when the ship was rocking. But she never married.
PATRICIA: Here, put it down, dear. I'm going to lie down; sit with me, if you like.

KAREN, *indicates Ping-Pong area*: Hardly anyone ever seems to come out there.
PATRICIA: They don't like exercise, they're too depressed . . . Don't feel obliged to say anything if you . . .
KAREN: I get sick to my stomach just looking at a boat. Does your husband hunt?
PATRICIA: Sit down. Relax yourself. You don't have to talk. (*CP* 292)

Perhaps a better example of such kind of mundane conversation that borders strongly on the absurd can be found in *Mr. Peters' Connections*, especially in the exchanges between the old man and his dead brother, Calvin:

PETERS: Well let's see. . . Oh, the hell with this, I'm leaving. *Starts to go*.
CALVIN: You can't!
PETERS: Don't you tell me I can't, I have very low cholesterol! *He turns and starts out*.
CALVIN: What about your wife?
PETERS: God, I almost forgot. *Sits meekly*. Thanks for reminding me . . .You always need a reason to stay. I have to stay because of my wife. Why because of my wife?
CALVIN: You're meeting her here.
PETERS: Right, yes! *Short pause.* Why am I meeting her here?
CALVIN: Probably because that was the arrangement. (405)

The audience is made aware of what they are talking about, even though, on the surface, it is a very plain, meaningless conversation. They are indeed speaking about Mr. Peters' final exit from the world. The old man's "reason" to stay is of course the relationships closest to him such as the one with Charlotte, his wife. The play's central message of "love" being the "subject" is hence justified even through this very banal dialogue between the characters.

In another sample conversation from this play, we find Mr. Peters going on about how the Pan Am dumped him "like a bag of shit" and Calvin going on about how the history of the nightclub they are currently sitting at (411). The two clearly do not seem to be listening to or answering each other, but, yet again, the playwright's socio-political concerns are clear to the audience.

Thus, analysing all aspects of Arthur Miller's dramatic presentation, it can be concluded that if "dramatic technique is simply the formulation of principles of structure from what has been observed in audience reaction" (Rowe 29), then Miller has indeed articulated his technique both symbolically and gracefully to prove himself worthy of his audiences' appreciation.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This research is but a small contribution to the little scholarship available on Arthur Miller's later plays, which, as stated previously, are often overshadowed by the success of his earlier, more popular plays of the 1940s and '50s. It emphasizes the fact that even though not as well-known as *Death of a Salesman* or *The Crucible,* the selected later plays are incredibly well-crafted dramatic works in their own right, and therefore, deserve to be more widely read, performed, watched, researched, and celebrated.

In his writing career that spanned over seventy years, Miller made a concerted endeavour to understand the various forces and events that shaped the fate of America. His attempts as a writer have also been a strenuous and perseverant exercise in using theatre for a higher cause. The playwright's selected plays demonstrate how he makes full use of the power of the dramatic stage to reach out to the masses—to both influence and critique the American society, and most importantly, to convey his message of love to humanity.

In fact, on close observation, Miller's writing—whether for plays or for his essays and other non-fiction works, serves as a narrative for the whole of the twentieth century. He personally lived through and experienced the various events such as the Depression of 1929, the Second World War, the inhuman scrutiny of the McCarthy Era— various episodes of American history that we see closely intertwined with the basic structure and message of his plays. However, it is not only historical, social, and political events that shape Miller's dramaturgy but also his very personal experiences with people and the environment around him that outline his stories and characters.

It may have been the Realism of Ibsen that encouraged Miller to write plays in the first place, but, it was the unflinchingly confident drama of O'Neill, Odets, Elmer Rice, and Williams, that taught Miller to succinctly exploit the full potential of the dramatic stage and to experiment more with form and technique. To his own admission, Williams' *Streetcar* granted him the "license to speak at full throat" (*Timebends* 182). His predecessors in American drama gave Miller the courage to challenge the conventions of the dramatic stage. He moved beyond Realism to experiment with form, language, and technique—to truly bring out onstage both inner and outer experiences of human life. His attempts at lyrical drama and his plays such as *Mr. Peters' Connections* that are predominantly absurdist in their plot and presentation give one the evidence of Miller's range as a dramatic

giant. His selected later plays also testify for how he has come a long way to be often regarded as the Shakespeare of twentieth-century American theatre, tirelessly honing his skills as a literary artist till the end of his life.

The three key chapters of this dissertation offer detailed discussions on the crucial questions: what is the "individual and social paralysis" that Miller both consciously and imaginatively depicts in these plays and how is the trauma of the individual connected integrally with the trauma of the society at large and vice-versa. As these plays testify, Miller's socio-political concerns remained firm till the end of his career but as is evident, in his later drama, these concerns just became more critical and his portrayal a shade darker than how it was in his earlier plays.

The selected plays can be viewed as both individual and social tragedies—as stories of the situation of the nation and its people. This research mainly focuses on the environment of alienation, numbness, and helplessness that Miller portrays in these works, in which we see the illness of the individual to be originating from a larger social and national illness and also adding to it at the same time. The fish is indeed in the water and water inside the fish. The discussion enclosed in this dissertation throws light upon how there is no separation possible between the individual and his society and how individuals often "fall sick in twos and threes and fours" and never alone. At the same time, the discussion also focuses on how the "cure" of all human illnesses can be found through the same process which renders humans ill and devastated in the first place.

In *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*, the bigamist, Lyman Felt, is the embodiment of depravity, narcissism, and greed—notions promoted by the phenomenon called Reaganism, which is a picture of America in the 1980s. Lyman Felt's injured, hospital-ridden state in the play is just a symbolic representation of a backbone-broken country riding on immoral values during the Reagan times. The allegorical representation of the country's social and moral corruption through Lyman Felt and his two wives justifies how individual woes are just microcosms of much larger social and national issues and also how smaller, everyday personal issues contribute to larger immorality and vacuum. Through a detailed discussion about all the selected plays, the second chapter seeks to justify this research's basic thesis statement, that is, individual and society are one unit, perennially affecting each other.

In *The Last Yankee*, the two depressives and their husbands personify the effects of living in a country that is moving speedily towards a state of complete emotional and mental breakdown, a scenario where familial, social, and personal spheres are in a complete disarray. The mental institution portrayed by Miller is but a symbolic portrayal of the

American society that has busied itself in worthless pursuits. That the problem of clinical depression is engulfing modern America like some serious epidemic is a fact and Miller's portrayal supports his claim that depression is not a problem of the individual, only; it is also a social problem.

In *Broken Glass*, the central characters again appear to be incarnations of larger social and national corruption, betrayal, and guilt. Confined to a wheelchair, Sylvia's paralysed legs demonstrate how betrayal and lack of responsibility have crippled the individual and also how the individual is adding to the larger national immobility and inaction in the face of evil. Even though based in the 1930s, the play remains as relevant for today's American audience as the present national condition appears to be far from better.

In *Mr. Peters' Connections* and *Danger: Memory*, the ageing protagonists appear to be leading meaningless lives, stuck in a country where they find no hope— no future, whatsoever. Even though slightly different from the other selected plays, these works portraying elderly characters with failing memories, are a perfect commentary on a nation that always insists on staying "young". A national environment that does not give enough respect to its elderly citizens and their experiences certainly adds to their existential dilemma.

Resurrection Blues satirically addresses the questions of faith, political idols, and ideological pursuits with reference to the modern American scenario. Jeanine, the central female character is again wheelchair confined and depressed, replicating her country's social, political, and moral decline. Starting from Jeanine, the playwright shows the moral and emotional numbness of all characters of the play, emphasizing how erroneous values can lead to complete chaos and decline.

Perhaps the most autobiographical amongst the selected plays, *Finishing the Picture* is a beautifully poignant portrayal of the sufferings of Miller's second wife, Marilyn Monroe, who died very young, succumbing to the pressures of a film industry that works on the twin principles of lust and greed. Revolving around the immobile and clinically depressed character of Kitty, the play offers an up-front commentary on the American film industry and mass media that Miller portrays as microcosms of the American nation itself.

However, while analyzing all of these plays, one must not forget that Miller's themes are all-encompassing, that is, the paralysis he wishes to portray can be witnessed in all spheres alike. For instance, when he offers a commentary on a declining film industry, he also at the same time, gives his audiences a background of the political developments in

the country. While Kitty is deteriorating, even the morals and political standards of America are deteriorating.

The discussion initiated in the previous chapter is extended further in the third chapter by highlighting how Arthur Miller's later drama is a vivid assortment of varied themes. There are four major themes that have been discussed at length in this chapter; first being the trauma of being "othered" in a country that lives in the mythical world of the "melting pot".

Alienation is probably the most prominent leitmotif that can be observed in the selected plays. Since America is predominantly a nation of immigrants, its residents are bound to feel alienated and subdued in the midst of its expansive landscape and a patchwork democracy. In each of the selected plays, by keeping at the centre characters with hyphenated identities, Miller addresses the theme of human alienation and discrimination based on race and type. In *Broken Glass*, the subject of American anti-Semitism forms the central story as Phillip Gellburg struggles with the dilemma—to be or not to be a Jew. The complications of his personality as an assimilating Jew have been discussed in this section, also taking into consideration the perceptions and reactions of other Jewish characters, Sylvia and Hyman in relation to their ethnic identities. The identity conflicts faced by the characters in this play are closely linked with their "racial" and "ethnic" backgrounds.

The theme of American anti-Semitism has been evoked in *Clara* as well as one of the two central characters of the play, Detective Lew Fine, is an American Jew. The play indeed is a beautiful exploration of how race affects the common masses of America. There are several preconceived notions that characters have against each other—forming several separating boundaries amongst themselves, depriving each other of the warmth of unconditional bonding and love, ingredients crucial for a healthy human survival.

The Ride Down Mt. Morgan also obliquely touches upon the racial tensions prevalent in the country as the central character of the play is a multi-ethnic man, with an Albanian father and a Jewish mother. His two wives also represent two different religious backgrounds: Theodora is a WASP while Leah is a Jew. Issues related to interracial marriages in America and common racial biases have been addressed in the discussion in this section.

The Last Yankee has also been analyzed through the lens of race and racism as the characters of Patricia and Leroy represent two forces of the American mainstream: Swedish American and Yankee American, respectively. While she is the immigrants' daughter whose American Dream has miserably failed, her husband has never really believed in any

"dream" like hers. This section focuses on how the two, despite their varying objectives in life, are equally troubled because of an environment that breeds "otherness" and discontent.

The conclusion drawn from this section is that Miller successfully manages to write from both sides of the "hyphen" and also beyond it since his concerns as a playwright are more universal than they are often perceived to be. An analysis of Miller's racial portrayals in these plays highlights how the playwright, despite being a Jewish-American himself, has an ability to go beyond types and write about human trauma in general.

Another theme that has been discussed at length in the third chapter is of women's alienation—mostly caused by a patriarchal set-up and fixed gender roles that we often see in Miller's plays. Offering a discussion on the portrayal of women in these plays, this section not only offers a feminist commentary on the selected works but also supports Miller's portrayal as realistic instead of deliberately damaging or demeaning, as it is usually thought to be. The women characters in these plays personify the harms of living in a society that is chiefly run by men. One important observation about the selected plays is that in almost all of them, the major burden of this shared paralysis is on the females: they are the ones who we see being treated for clinical depression and immobility. They are the ones confined to wheelchairs and hospital beds, obliquely offering a commentary on a basic social structure that has always relegated and traumatized women. This section is a complete feminist discourse on the selected plays.

In *Broken Glass*, it is Sylvia Gellburg, who we see as a victim of the times in which she is born and raised, that is the 1930s— a time when higher education was mostly the privilege of the males, and women, if professionally active, were supposed to give up on their careers post marriage or childbirth. Even the other female character in the play, Margaret Hyman, appears to be suffering in the clutches of patriarchy for despite being an energetic and capable female, she is bound to work as a nurse to her doctor-husband and not allowed to make choices that she really wishes to make.

In *The Last Yankee*, the clinical depression of Patricia and Karen can be seen as directly related to their purposeless lives, in which they have always been expected to be homebound, doing nothing substantial when their husbands have gone to attend to work. Miller has been concerned about more number of female depressives at mental institutions, a concern that he has openly addressed through this play. At the same time, the playwright is not denying the fact that his male characters are also numbed and depressed. However, in these plays, he keeps female depressives at the centre because the social format of the world has always made it tougher for women to cope with various environmental pressures.

The Ride Down Mt. Morgan also essays the misery of modern American women as the two central female characters in the play, Theodora and Leah, are evidently exploited at the hands of a bigamist husband. Despite all these years of double-dealing and deceit with these two women, Lyman still feels that he made "his" women very happy by providing them with the best of things.

In *Finishing the Picture* and *Mr. Peters'* Connections, not only do Kitty and Cathy appear nude on stage but they are also mute characters. In depriving these women of dialogue, Miller creatively shows the audience the actual state of our society. The two women are shown to be suffering immobility in a predominantly male world.

Another theme discussed in this chapter centres around the alienation and depression caused to human beings as part of a capitalistic society. The discussion in this subsection captures how the big American Dream renders human lives small and how material acquisition is indeed no guarantee to human happiness. The conclusion drawn is that one of the major problems of first world societies such as America is their "pursuit of happiness" through things and not people. The Dream of America only appears to be a dream of acquiring and collecting more—as is exemplified through the various characters of these plays. This subsection is also based on how in Miller's later plays, there is a paradigm shift in terms of the economic setup of his stories; they depict an overall environment of material well-being, yet, there is a deep-rooted discontent among the characters of these plays.

The analysis establishes the fact that material chase only leads to chaos and dilemma in the human society, which are the choicest gifts of Capitalism. Perhaps *The Last Yankee* amongst all these plays is a perfect portrayal of the constant tug of war that goes on between materialistic and non-materialistic forces of the country embodied in the characters of Leroy Hamilton and Leroy Frick. The capitalistic ideals of the American nation often take a toll on its citizens. This dilemma is equally reflected in some of the other selected plays also. *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* is again a very explicit commentary on the "greed is good" diktat of the Reagan times in America— almost a complete decade that promoted extravagance and egotism amongst people. *Resurrection Blues*, even though based in a mysterious, anonymous land, is also a reflection of the American society that is eager to film/televise and view the live crucifixion of a man for the sheer love of cheap entertainment and money.

The last subsection of the third chapter is an exploration of strained human relationships as portrayed in the selected plays, with a special focus on the institution of

"marriage" in modern America. Various other themes that are discussed before this one lead to a natural conclusion that stuck amidst the confines of race, type, gender, and greed, the men and women in the modern American society are bound to suffer conflicts in their interpersonal relations. This particular subsection closely analyses Miller's portrayal of marriage in the selected plays; it may be concluded that in an environment of separation and numbness, the bond of marriage is also bound to become a bondage, completely devoid of happiness. The central married couples of these plays: the Gellburgs of *Broken Glass*, the Hamiltons and the Fricks of *The Last Yankee* and the Felts of *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* are all reflections of otherness and loveless unions. In fact, human relationships are as strained in all the other selected plays also; "divorce" is written all over these stories. There appears to be a deep conflict between parents and children also. Even though obliquely, within this subsection, the conclusion drawn is that there is an urgent need to communicate and convey, a dearth of which only increases human trauma.

These themes collectively explain how the various characters of these plays are both individuals and types: Miller offers us a range from rich businessmen to carpenters to film directors—all stuck in a deteriorating environment, but then again, they are the very "society" the playwright both wishes to critique and improve through his art. Another important fact that emerges from the analysis is that perhaps the most intriguing feature of Miller's playwriting is his attitude towards human suffering— where he perceives and presents the individual both as a victim and oppressor, as both the "jellyfish", unable to control its own flow in the water and also as the responsible human who takes cognizance of the fact that "there are other people" and that the fate of humanity is indeed in the human hands, only. Taking control of the tide is important for human survival.

These plays bear testimony to the fact that till the end of his career as a playwright, Miller remained firm in his belief that the dramatic stage can be used as a medium to both address and solve the human predicament. Despite such matter-of-fact portrayals of human angst and suffering, these plays successfully manage to give the message of hope and not paralysis. What he constantly emphasizes is that in these individual and social tragedies that have built for the human an environment of moral depravation and numbness, how human beings choose to act decides their fate.

In fact, despite the evidently experimental, absurdist, and surrealistic makeup of his later plays, Miller emerges as a hopeless believer in the psychological realism of his characters. He is certainly not the one to leave his audience with ultimate absurdity but with hope and life. The selected plays emphasize strongly on how positive human mobility and

mutual interdependence are the solutions to individual and social paralysis engulfing the modern world. These plays focus how shutting one's eyes to evil cannot help the human situation—Miller's portrayal thus both dissects the forces of evil and provides a solution to conquer them.

As is exemplified through the plots, characters, and themes of the selected plays, Miller is urging the individual to move out of his state of perennial stasis. For instance, the discussion in these chapters portrays Sylvia as a victim of her social, familial, and national environment, yet, what Miller wants us to realize is that it is imperative for the woman to move out of the "wheelchair"— crushing the forces that inhibit her. It is perhaps a resonant echo that we hear in *The Last Yankee* also—where the playwright focuses on how human effort and love can take one out of a hospital bed. Even in *Mr. Peters' Connections*, the "subject" that emerges finally is "love".

Miller has often been both appreciated and critiqued as a "social dramatist"; the present research highlights how he is a man both committed to socio-political causes and also a dramatist par excellence above all. While Chapters 2 and 3 bring to light Miller's socio-political concerns, Chapter 4 is an effort to highlight how till the end of his life, the playwright persevered to improve upon his art and technique of drama. In different subsections of this chapter, Miller's art of dramatic construction has been analyzed and discussed. The selected plays are not only aptly titled and written, but also very well executed. There is an overall cohesiveness in them that bares open the fact that these later creations of his canon are indeed works of great diligence and experience. There are several aspects of Miller's playwriting such as the choice of his titles, naming of his characters, symbolic characterization, choice of costumes and props, and usage of apt music and dance, slangy yet poetic dialogue, that have been analyzed in detail in this chapter. It can be conclusively stated here that the selected plays are not only socio-politically relevant but also a validation of his skilled dramatic technique. They must certainly be researched upon for studying and dissecting Miller's experiments with dramatic form and method, which are uniquely his own. This last chapter attempts to clear the air about Miller only being a socially relevant playwright— he is a dramatic craftsman who certainly deserves more credit for his technique.

Even though the present research has attempted to analyze the selected plays in detail, a lot more can be done to analyze other aspects of this patch of Miller's writing. And even though this dissertation repeatedly refers to the plays produced between 1987-2004 as Miller's later drama, one must not forget that there are many other plays by him, produced

in the 1970s and ’80s such as *The American Clock*, that are not popularly read, performed, or researched. Efforts need to be made by researchers of American drama and theatre to bring to the centre stage these later yet immensely significant pieces of Miller’s glorious canon. Research can also be devoted to a comparative analysis of Miller’s earlier and later plays—which again would be a task requiring great lengths of time and effort because of the mammoth body of Arthur Miller’s works.

Notes

i. When the word "Native" is written with a capital "N", it refers to Indigenous Americans, and when it starts with a lower-case, it denotes people born in America.

ii On 2 September 1642, the playhouses of all kinds were shut in England, according to an Ordinance of the Lords and Commons (Price 68)

iii *Kristallnacht*, translating to "night of broken glass" in English, is a reference to the broken glass shreds of destructed Jewish property that lay scattered on the roads in Germany when in November, 1938, the Nazi forces broke into open violence against the Jewish populace as a part of its "November pogrom"; Jewish shops and homes were ruthlessly plundered by the Germans (Steinweis 1-2).

iv From here onwards Arthur Miller's *Collected Essays* edited by Matthew Charles Roudane (2017) will be denoted as *CE*.

v Alphabetically arranged in accordance with authors' surnames

vi From here onwards, in the entire text of this document, Miller's *Collected Plays* (1987-2004) published by the Library of America (edited by Tony Kushner), will be denoted as *CP*.

vii The term "Jewish Self-Hatred" was popularised by Theodore Lessing through his book, titled, *Der Jüdische Selbsthass* (Jewish Self Hatred). Sanders Gilman in his book, *Jewish Self-Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews*, explains that "self-hatred results from outsiders' acceptance of the mirage of themselves generated by their reference group" (2). A fuller discussion about Phillip's conflicts of identity and the theme of Jewishness have been detailed in Chapter 3.

viii "The Talking Cure"/ "Chimney Sweeping" are terms coined by a female patient of psychotherapist and writer, Josef Breuer. She is referred to as "Anna O" in *Studies on Hysteria* (1895) by Freud and Breuer; her real name being Bertha Pappenheim. She benefitted positively through "talking" about her traumatic experiences to her therapist. Like Sylvia, even Pappenheim was a patient of hysteria. "During the course of their treatment Breuer spent a medically unprecedented amount of time" with her between "1880 and the middle of 1882" (Hunter. D 471). Just like Hyman does in the play, Breuer would visit the young lady and listen to the "most minute details of her present and past life" as a part of her treatment procedure (471).

ix In medical and psychiatric terminology, "hysteria" is known as "conversion disorder", denoting a condition in which there are "deficits" in a patient's "voluntary motor or sensory function" caused by psychological distress or anxiety (Jarvis 28). Paralysis of limbs, blindness, and fits are some common examples of "conversion disorder" (28).

x One of America's founding fathers who co-wrote the country's constitution.

xi In *Timebends* (1987), Miller writes about the origin of these two characters, stating that he based Leo-Leonora on his close friends and Roxbury neighbours, Louisa and Sandy Calder, friends

that Miller remembered very fondly. The Calders have also been described by Miller as feeling cut off and isolated from the present but Abbotson points out that Miller's Leo-Leonora are not as responsible as Miller's Calders were (Abbotson, "Dangers" 39).

[xii] Kroll once saw his daughter very close to a female companion of hers and thought he saw the two kissing (*CP* 40).

[xiii] As cited in a report titled, "Older Americans: Key Indicators of Well-Being (2016)": agingstats.gov/docs/LatestReport/Older-Americans-2016-Key-Indicators-ofWellBeing.pdf

[xiv] Maggie in *After the Fall* and Kitty in *Finishing the Picture*

[xv] Larry is an "unflattering portrayal" of Monroe's second husband, the baseball player, Joe DiMaggio (Abbotson, *Critical* 250).

[xvi] White Anglo Saxon Protestant.

[xvii] Arthur Miller's application to work at an auto-parts warehouse, Chadick-Delamater, was initially rejected until a friend put in a good word for him. Miller was the only Jew employee to work there and this became his first "real experience of U.S AntiSemitism" (Abbotson, *Critical* 376).

[xviii] a Yiddish term for a non-Jewish/*gentile* female, often used derogatorily.

[xix] Arthur Miller, himself an American Jew, disappointed his maternal grandfather by marrying a *gentile* woman. In the first chapter of his memoir, *Timebends: A Life* (1987), Miller narrates how when in 1940, he decided to wed a *gentile* woman (Mary Slattery, his first wife), his grandfather threw a heavy alarm clock at Miller's mother to show his contempt, narrowly missing her head (5).

[xx] Edna Ferber, the Pulitzer Prize winning Jewish-American novelist, and also one of the pioneers in the field of Jewish-American feminism, firmly believed that Jews and females had to be better skilled and more hard working than others (men and non-Jews), simply because their lives were harder (Shapiro 52). Like Sylvia Gellburg, even Edna Ferber, was deeply troubled by the Nazi threat rising in the world while most other Americans did not/could not see it as serious (53).

[xxi] In the 1930s, among the Jewish-American community, home symbolized a woman's spiritual sphere of dominance. Though politically, the status of all American women had improved with enfranchisement in 1920, they were still expected to be good homemakers, only. In her article, "Transitions in Judaism: The Jewish-American Woman Through the 1930s", Norma Fain Pratt highlights the social and religious situation of Jewish-American women who lived through the Depression years in America. "Women's spiritual sphere was the moral purity of the household" in which they were the chief regulators of diet and cleanliness (Pratt 685). While a woman's word regarding *kashruth* (the Jewish dietary laws) was taken very seriously, her testimony in a law court was not accepted as valid (685).

[xxii] In the early 1900s, women had started functioning as active participants at synagogues but still, the more "significant" religious rituals such as "surrounding the handling" and "reading of the Torah" were to be carried out only by men (Pratt 687).

[xxiii] Jewish-American women found work at all sorts of small and big factories and shops, but even after having carved an influential space for themselves in the workforce, they were expected to give up their sources of income as soon as they were married.

[xxiv] But in most cases, the wages earned by these hard-working young girls helped to provide for the household or pay for a brother's education; the unmarried working girls could soothe a mother constantly running short of money (Sochen 10).

[xxv] The situation was as humiliating and torturous even for women from the Protestant and Catholic sections of America. Women constituted "more than 25 percent of the total labor force" in the post-Depression America (Abelson 117). They were "routinely discriminated against in public employment" and lost jobs more frequently than men did (106). The "self-supporting woman" of the 1920s carrying the beacon of "emancipation", was mostly underpaid labor (110). Surveys regarding the homeless unemployed women of the 1930s reveal that most of the unsheltered struggling women were either unmarried, divorced, deserted, separated, or widowed (110).

[xxvi] Even though it was common for Jewish parents in those times to force their unmarried daughters to stay sexually inactive and "virginal" (Fishman 103), the daughters did not always stick to parental caution. The 1920s and '30s can be seen as important decades for women's liberation in some very small yet significant ways. It was precisely this time when Jewish-American women began practicing birth control in order to regulate their family-size; some even resorted to abortion (103). This courage and initiative to find effective birth control methods can be seen as healthy "Americanization" of the Jewish immigrant women (Sochen 24).

[xxvii] Sisyphus, in Greek Mythology, was cursed to continually roll a heavy boulder up a mountain, whereby, due to the weight of the boulder itself, it would inevitably fall back down. Such was Sisyphus's fate for all eternity. This myth is regarded as an ultimate emblem of drudgery, futility, and meaninglessness of labour that lacks creativity and realization of self.

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Arthur Miller's life and plays have fascinated, inspired, and moved her right from the time she first read *Death of a Salesman* and *The Crucible* as part of her bachelor's curriculum. But it was much later that she recognized her inclination towards Miller's later plays, which she believes deserve much more love, respect, and scholarship than they have received till now. She wishes to continue contributing to the same.

Research Publications

Singh, Ambika, and Nupur Tandon. "The "rag doll" won't move; the curious case of Sylvia Gellburg." *The Arthur Miller Journal*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2019 (accepted for publication).

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