GUILT, BETRAYAL, AND SELF-DECEPTION IN ARTHUR MILLER'S *ALL MY SONS* AND *DEATH OF SALESMAN*

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Abstract

Arthur Miller's plays depict the human tendency of self-deception, betrayal and guilt which leads to the deterioration and the collapse of human values. The intensity of these elements may vary but they run through all of his plays. In *All My Sons*, Joe, a selfish businessman, in order to save his business from ruin, supplies defective cylinder heads to the American Air Force which results in the death of 21 fighter plane pilots. Joe atones for his crime by committing suicide. In *Death of Salesman*, the central subject is the collapse of dreams and false nature of protagonist which bring about not only his own ruin but also that of his family. The play also shows the contradicting feelings of self-deception, betrayal and guilt which speed Willy to his demise. According to Miller, the American Dream creates false hopes that prevent people from being proud of what they have accomplished to make their lives better than they would be elsewhere, and eventually fail at achieving anything.

Keywords: American drama; Arthur Miller; *All My Sons*; *Death of a Salesman*; guilt; betrayal; self-deception.

الخلاصة

تصور مسرحيات آرثر ميللر ميل الإنسان نحو خداع الذات والخيانة والشعور بالذنب والذي يقود إلى تدهور وإنهيار القيم الإنسانية. وقد تختلف حدة هذه العناصر لكنها موجودة في كل مسرحياته. ففي مسرحية *كل أبنائي*، يقوم رجل الأعمال الأناني جو ببيع إسطوانات محرك تالفة للقوة الجوية الأميركية لأجل إنقاذ عمله من الإنهيار مما يؤدي إلى موت ٢١ طياراً. يكفر جو عن ذنبه بالإنتحار. أما في مسرحية موت بائع متجول، فأن الموضوع الرئيس هو إنهيار الحلم والطبيعة الكاذبة للبطل المسرحي والتي لا تسبب دماره وحسب بل دمار عائلته. فالمسرحية تظهر المشاعر المتظاربة من خداع الذات والخيانة والشعور بالذنب التي تعجِّل بولي نحو نهايته. وطبقاً لميللر،فإن الحلم الأميركي يخلق أمالاً كاذبة تمنع الأشخاص من أن يكونوا فخورين بما يحققون لأجل جعل حيواتهم أفضل مما ستكون عليه في مكانٍ آخر، ويفشلون في تحقيق أي شيءٍ في النهاية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المسرحية الأميركية؛ آرثر ميللر؛ كل أبنائي؛ موت بائع متجول؛ الشعور بالذنب؛ الخيانة؛ خداع الذات.

Guilt, Betrayal, and Self-Deception in Miller's *All My Sons* and *Death of Salesman*

Guilt is fundamentally a prosocial behavior because it strengthens interpersonal relationships. It is a kind of regretful, remorseful, painful, and aversive feeling aroused by one's own actions or inactions. Guilt is different from regret in that guilt is more related to interpersonal harm whereas regret is more related to intrapersonal harm. Guilt is usually related to and is operationalized as the acceptance of responsibility for harm. Guilt has long been related to prosocial behavior. People tend to use altruistic means when under the stress of guilt.[1]

Under the pressure of being guilty, one uses self-deception which is one of the popular escape methods that people use to prevent themselves from feeling guilty

while in the same time allowing themselves to escape from something that they don't want to face. Self-deception involves a blind or unexamined acceptance of a belief that can easily be seen as "spurious" if the person were to inspect the belief impartially or from the perspective of the generalized other.[2]

Using self-deception as a means to escape guilt, results in causing a circle of betrayal. The effects of betrayal include shock, loss and grief, damaged self-esteem, self-doubt, and anger. Not infrequently,they produce life-altering changes. The effects of a catastrophic betrayal are most relevant for anxiety disorders.[3]

This study, however, attempts to investigate how guilt, self-deception and betrayal operate in two plays by Arthur Miller, and how the protagonists try to hide their deeds, which result in making their lives unlivable. The problem of these elements is one of the major themes Miller dealt with in his plays.

All My Sons deals with the dream delusion of Joe Keller, seemingly successful, self-made man who, to attain the material upward mobility, adopted unethical and immoral means in the past. As the play opens, Joe Keller is described as a "heavy man of stolid mind and build, a business man these many years, but with the imprint of the machine-shop worker and boss still upon him". (I, 6) He appears to be a magnet in the neighborhood—neighbors come and go from his yard, and a young boy comes to play games with Joe. He is easily content with simple things, like reading the newspaper on the porch, and enjoys spending time with his family.

At the introspective phase of life, Keller realizes the emptiness of his success. The seeds of unethical means he has sowed in the past have brought him bitter harvest and sore fruits. The protagonist is a representative type of the character who has lived through the Depression and despite a lack of education has been able to attain the worldly success, hoping his son would inherit it. Joe represents common hopes and aspirations of American society, ultimately willing to achieve material prosperity.[4]

Miller reveals Keller's problem and trouble: "His cast of mind cannot admit that he, personally, has any viable connection with his world, his universe, or his society." [5] According to Keller's moral code, his actions are not criminal as he is doing it for the sake of the family. Consequently, he denies any responsibility or guilt and insists on his innocence. For Keller, "Nothing is bigger than the family." (III, 83) The setting of the play described at the beginning of Act One also emphasizes this narrow-minded and restricted view: "The stage is hedged on right and left by tall, closely planted poplars which lend the yard a secluded atmosphere." (I, 3) Miller's description of the backyard of the Keller home illustrates a metaphor for Keller's mind and range of vision.

Keller indirectly admits his suffering through his speech with Bert: "Seein' the jail ain't allowed, Bert. You know that." (I, 11) Metaphorically, his guilty mind creates a kind of jail which causes him suffering, yet he cannot admit it. So he uses Bert to be his spy in order to know whether or not people are still talking about his past deeds. Keller tells Anne, his son's fiancée: "The only one still talks about it is my wife." (I, 31) Kate, on the other hand, indicates: "That's because you keep on playing policeman with the kids. All their parents hear out of you is jail, jail, jail." (I, 31)

Keller tries to convince himself that the people who used to call him "Murderer" (I, 31) are the same who play with him: "Every Saturday night the whole gang is playin' poker in this arbor. All the ones who yelled murderer takin' my money now." (I, 31) Joe Keller, an escapist, wants to run away from reality. To safeguard himself, he has prepared around him a web of his false assumptions. He asserts that the power of money makes people forget his indulgence in crime. The truth seems surrendered to almighty money. His assertion underlines the corrupt mentality of

American society which recognizes and honors the material success attained by betraying the character-ethic.

Keller sees the family as everything. His view is expressed by Sue, their neighbor when she calls his family "The Holy family." (II, 49) Sue is of course ironic. Keller holds up the family as a supreme ideal by lying to himself and believing his lies. In this sense, he tries to be the perfect father, husband, businessman and neighbor, but his guilt, shame, and the reality are something totally different. The family is his only justification for the crime he has committed. He is able to stave off guilt by telling Chris and Kate and, ultimately, himself, that he only did it for the family: "Chris... Chris, I did it for you...For you! A business for you." (I, 15) And "I'm his father and he's my son, and if there's something bigger than that I'll put a bullet in my head!" (III, 83) He is willing to put all other ethics aside for the integrity of taking care of the family, and he lies and cheats by covering up the cracked airplane parts. Joe indicates this fact: "What could I do! I'm in business, a man is in business; a hundred and twenty cracked, you're out of business …". (II, 67)

At the beginning of the play, the self-made Joe, devoted Kate and loving Chris appear to be a perfect family. Their self-deception and guilt are laid bare as the play develops. Their nature is revealed as they react to the crisis that arises "whenever the hand of the distant past reaches out of its grave ... to reveal some unreadable hidden order behind the amoral chaos of events." For Miller, "it is the point of *All My Sons* – that there are times when things do indeed cohere".[6] The only outside world for Keller is his business. Therefore, he is reflecting the values of this world. The business world does not have human values. Thus Miller puts part of blame for Keller's action on the society and business world whose values are fake. In this kind of world, human values are discarded.

Joe is not the only one to blame; other characters have taking part in causing his guilt, self-deception, and betrayal directly or indirectly. Chris, for example, is part of this dilemma, for reasons which are shown by George:

Then why isn't your name on the business? Explain that to her!
Chris: What the hell has that got to do with...?
George: Annie, why isn't his name on it?
Chris: Even when I don't own it! (III, 61-62)

Most likely, Chris tries to do something but he was afraid of consequences as he reports: "I don't know why it is, but every time I reach out for something I want, I have to pull back because other people will suffer." (I, 15) Then Joe tells Chris that he has collected his money by being honest and working hard: "Sometimes I think you're … ashamed of the money. … It's good money, there is nothing wrong with that. " (I, 41) Though Chris has suspicions, but he ignores and tries to be like his father: "If I have to grub for money all day long at least at evening I want it beautiful. I want a family, I want some kids, I want to build something that I can give myself to." (I, 17) There is more than one incident which shows Chris's knowledge of the past deed, when he asks Joe not to talk about his partner as: "People misunderstand you!" (II, 53)

For Sue, Chris who always gives lessons of ideology and values to Dr. Bayliss, Sue's husband, has done some compromise with his idealist nature. After Sue's departure, Annie tells Chris how people on the block including Sue consider Joe guilty. But Chris' love for his father makes him deny the fact. Annie, too, seems convinced by Chris firm opinion about his father. However, she reminds him that she has turned her face from her father assuming him guilty. She has not forgiven her own

father, and threatens Chris that if anything wrong she comes to know she can do the same with Keller.

Chris Keller is responsible for his family's dilemma. The idealistic youth who energetically professes to detest dishonesty is as guilty as his parents for attempting to hide from reality. Though he persists in pushing his mother toward an acceptance of his brother's death, he does so for his own selfish reasons and not because he thinks it is in her best interest to be able to face reality. Likewise, even though he adopts a high moral tone and energetically indicts his father for his criminal irresponsibility, Chris knows that his words ring hollow because he has long suspected his father's guilt but deliberately avoided confronting the truth — again for purely selfish motives: "I suspected my father and I did nothing about it." (III, 87)

At some level, Chris fears that, if he allows himself to see his father's human imperfections, he will also have to recognize his own limitations — and his experiences in the war makes him dread that confrontation. Having watched heroic young men under his command die selflessly in battle to save their comrades, Chris feels guilty for failing them and surviving the war. Chris desperately wants to escape this guilt and the anguish it produces, so, when given the chance, he tries to seek relief by disguising, his disgust with himself as contempt for his father. His father becomes his scapegoat, and Chris casts all his own feelings of guilt and self—loathing onto his father in the hope that, by destroying his father, he can somehow expiate his own sins and escape from his own personal torment.

In a revealing comment, Chris tells his father why he is outraged by his socially irresponsible act: "I know you're no worse than most men but I thought you were better. I never saw you as a man. I saw you as my father." (III, 83) By buying into the ideal father myth, Chris perpetuates the lie that his father is anything more than just a man. Such self-deception not only fosters Keller's illusions, but also paves the way for Chris's eventual, and inevitable, disillusionment. He demands the impossible — perfection from the imperfect — and inadvertently reinforces Keller's absurd conception of himself as above the law and his society. Paradoxically, when faced with the unmistakable proof that this unshakable image of his father has been nothing but an illusion, Chris unrealistically expects and demands the kind of noble gesture that is inconsistent with his father's badly flawed character.

Ann Deever suspects Keller's guilt and betrayal because of the letter she received from Larry before his suicide; however, she refrains from impeaching Keller until she feels compelled to do so in order to save her relationship with Chris. Her motives are selfish, governed primarily by a fundamental drive for self-preservation.

Kate knows very well her husband's deed. When Joe Keller plays a game with the neighbor's children, Kate warns him that he must stop "the whole jail business!", Joe replies, "What have I got to hide?" (II, 74) This indicates that there is something to hide. According to Stephen Centolla, Joe and Kate are "uncomfortable together because of their shared guilt and shame." [7] One is over-confident and the other is anxious. Joe and his wife live in fear of bad news, about their son and about the crime they have conspired to deny, the two inevitable connected in their minds. All the characters are drawn together by love, but that love becomes the source of a certain corruption. Christopher Bigsby indicates that:

Indeed, no one in this play is without culpability, without cruelty, without guilt. Kate's obsession with one son's fate makes her act with a callous disregard for the future of the other. Ann and George act in some degree out of guilt for the callousness with which they have treated their father. Even Joe Keller's suicide is, in part, an act of self-justification and 'a counterblow to his wife and son'. Like some Chinese who

hang themselves in the doorways of the people who have offended them, and that many suicides are motivated by a desire to accuse or leave a residue of guilt.[8]

Kate tells Chris that she has seen a dream, a kind of nightmare in which Larry falls from the sky despite her attempts to save him. This, however, indicates that at some level of her subconscious, Kate knows right well the truth of her son's death. Besides, the way she dreams of him as falling from the sky shows the blame she bears her husband and his faulty cylinder heads for the death of her son. Yet, she hopes that Larry is still alive somewhere, for this belief is at the crux of her ability to continue supporting her husband. Otherwise, she would have overtly rejected him for shipping the faulty cylinder heads:

Your brother's alive, darling, because if he's dead,
your father killed him.
Do you understand me now?
As long as you live, that boy is alive.
God does not let a son be killed by his father. (III, 63-64)

Harold Clurman blames Kate Keller for being the "the villain in the Keller's home." [9] She is fully aware of Joe's crime from the very start, but she never openly speaks of it in order to keep "her brood safe and her home undisturbed." [10] Instead of encouraging her husband to face his responsibilities honestly, she protects him against prosecution by defending Joe and tells George that Joe was staying home from work on the day the cracked engine heads were shipped out.

On the other hand, Kate denies her son's death by desperately trying to freeze the moment of Larry's disappearance. In this way, it is her silence and her selfishness that partly causes Steve Deever's imprisonment and his family's breakup. Therefore, she is also guilty by being an accomplice in the crime, while Joe commits it. Accordingly, "the play shows that Kate, as much as Joe, destroyed George's family" and "she [Kate] must be condemned along with Keller because of her active cooperation with the crime" In her mind, Kate connects Joe's criminal act with the absence of their son.[11]

When hearing the news of George Deever's visit, Kate warns Keller, "be smart now, Joe. The boy is coming. Be smart." (I, 43) Obviously, Kate knows the real purpose behind George's visit, and her anger and stiffness seems to tell Joe that he is the murderer and his final day comes with George's coming. Keller is deeply hurt and frightened by her warning and suggestion. Kate frequently uses her knowledge of Joe's actual guilt to avenge for causing her son's death and her own torture and misery. Miller himself also points out Kate's sinister side. Miller comments that Kate is "a woman using truth as a weapon against the man who had harmed her son […] there's a sinister side to her in short." [12]

James Flanagan, reads George's arrival as an activity giving different dimensions to several strands. To him: "The play is a web, then of home spun fidelities, of faith placed and misplaced, a network of belief that, like the apple tree, snaps under pressure."[13] George comes with the snap of truth to shake belief of Chris and Joe's web of illusion. Realizing the danger in George's arrival, Joe offers to set his career as a lawyer in his home town. By doing so, it is his effort to win the sympathy of Annie and George. Moreover, he tries to tempt Annie offering a good job for her father. But on the other hand, he is not willing to accept Steve Deever as his partner. The practical minded Joe is not ready to show any concrete favor to Deever

who is actually a victim of Keller's deception. Joe's selfish nature makes him forget the sacrifice of Deever which saved him from total ruin.[14]

Joe's head is so full of dreams that he will let his son inherit his factory which he has run for decades. This is related to the American ethos and here we can sympathize with Joe as a tragic figure. Samuel A. Yorks explains: "After all, in our society a business to pass on to one's sons is a badge of honor for a life well spent. Joe obeys the values the clan has taught him."[15] Joe's problem is not in the fact he could not distinguish between right and wrong as Miller himself explains, but in the fact since he sticks to the small world such as a family, he could not turn his eyes to the general society at large, the world beyond the family.

Joe has been morally misled by the 'mores' of an abhorrent society, a society that Chris comes to describe as "the land of the great big dogs." (III, 87) Keller has been taught that it is the winner who continues to play the game and that society can turn a blind eye to moral concerns so long as the production line keeps rolling, this is the essence of capitalism. In *All My Sons*, Miller makes it clear that society in general values money and profit more than human life. Bigsby indicates:

The play may express regret, through several characters, that money has become a primary determinant, but it is money that Chris promises to Ann. What is at stake is a model of human relationships which turns on mutual dependency, mutual responsibility.[16]

In addition, although the neighbors know about Keller's guilt as Sue indicates: "There's not a person on the block who doesn't know the truth", (II, 49) they are still friends with him and seem to accept it. This makes things even worse because this way Keller's illusion seems to be morally right and confirmed. Nevertheless, Keller denies any connection to the crime and to the community whose trust he has betrayed, by acting as if the court paper were proof of his innocence. His denial of personal culpability shows not only his lack of remorse, but also his unwillingness to face the consequences of his actions.[17]

Keller, thinks that he has achieved the "American Dream": he lives in a "comfortable house" despite being an "uneducated man." His strong family unit is an illusion. His wife is ill, Chris is discontent, and Larry has committed suicide as a result of his father's narrow-minded and reprehensible decision. It is through the letter from Larry that Keller realizes that he has not only killed one son but all of his sons. Bigsby indicates that *All My Sons* is

A play about repression, about the compromises effected by individuals negotiating between private needs and public obligations. Joe is not the only character to substitute the story of his life for his life. They all construct fictions that enable them to justify themselves in their own eyes, as much as in the eyes of others. And this, it seems, is equally true of the neighbors and, beyond them, of a society that generates its own myths about innocence. What we witness is in part a collision of fictions which are mutually destructive, and, hence, their slow erosion, as what has been repressed begins to force its way to the surface.[18]

Joe Keller, the real culprit, successfully manages to make all his neighbors and even Steve's children believe that he is innocent and Steve's negligence causes that fatal accident. In fact, nobody has forgotten Joe's crime; rather, Keller himself wants to forget the past and even appeals to Annie to forget. But it is quite difficult to forget

that incident and its consequences, which has almost destroyed her family; her father is being imprisoned, her mother is expecting a. Moreover, an accident makes them leave their house.[19]

Up until the very end of the play, Joe's loyalty to his family him to his responsibility to be moral outside his family. Though Joe is devastated after Chris blasts him about his lack of morality, Joe is not concerned with his lack of morality but about his relationship with Chris. Joe remains adamant in his belief that his responsibility to his family excuses all of his other responsibilities, even when Kate points out that this vision excuses his immoral act. Only after Joe hears Larry's suicide letter does he accept what he has been told. Joe gravely admits, "Sure, he was my son. But I think to him they were all my sons. And I guess they were, I guess they were" (III, 83). He realizes he has a moral responsibility in the world at large.[20]

In fact, the origin of the plot of *All My Sons* lies in the incident of Joe Keller's rejection of guilt and its consequences. Joe Keller is the self-made man who has attained his success, starting from rags-to-riches. His success is stained with blood and deception.

In *All My Sons,* Miller shows how the impulse to betray and to deny responsibility for others, when left ungoverned, can run rampant and wreak havoc on the individual, his family, and his society — even, perhaps, civilization as a whole. The paradox of denial, therefore, is the very defense mechanism that is employed to justify the rightness of a socially reprehensible act can ultimately become the exclusive means by which an individual self-destructs. The Kellers, and many of those around them, choose to blame everyone else for their dilemma, but only they are the authors of their destiny — and their failure to accept the tremendous burden of their freedom and responsibility is itself the cause of their personal tragedy.[21]

In Miller's *Death of a Salesman,* Willy Loman faces conflict with both himself and society when he realizes that he has been blinded to the true values in life by what society deems "valuable" and then must decide what to do about it. Willy's desperate dwelling in the past and denying the present does not help him achieve the self-realization or self-knowledge typical of the tragic hero. He cannot grasp the true personal, emotional, and spiritual understanding of himself as a literal "Loman" or "low man." Willy is too driven by his own "willy"-ness or perverse "willfulness" to recognize the slanted reality that his desperate mind has forged.[22]

Willy's fortification of a swamp of lies, delusions, and self-deceptions is an attempt to ignore the significant accomplishment of his partial self-realization. Willy's failure to recognize the anguished love offered to him by his family is crucial to the climax of his torturous day, and the play presents this incapacity as the real tragedy. Despite this failure, Willy makes the most extreme sacrifice in his attempt to leave an inheritance that will allow Biff to fulfill the American dream, which is his obsession.[23]

Willy wants his sons to be happy and successful but they turn their backs on him, even ignore the fact that they know him. "No, that's not my father. He's just a guy." (II, 58) Willy believes that Biff will be a successful businessman and it turns out that Biff is still searching to find himself, as Linda indicates: "He's finding himself, Willy", which makes Willy disappointed: "Not finding yourself at the age of thirty-four is a disgrace!" (I, 9)

Miller establishes Willy Loman as a nostalgic character, who loves to be a wanderer in the past. In fact, it is quite general phenomenon when one does not feel comfortable with the harsh realities of the present and tries to find out shelter in the past by recalling the pleasant memories of the by gone days or shifts himself to the future with the flight of fancy and imagination. It is now a routine matter for Willy to

lose the mind sinking into past and dreaming about future. Linda indicates this fact by telling him that his mind: "is overactive" (I, 9). Willy escapes the reality by living in an imaginary world, as he fails to achieve his American dream.[24]

Willy is not the only one to blame, his family causes his suffering and this results in causing a circle of unescapable guilt, self-deception and betrayal that control their lives. At the time Willy seems to recognize his averageness as a salesman, he tells Linda, "You know, the trouble is, Linda, people don't seem to take to me…. I don't know the reason for it, but they just pass me by. I'm not noticed…." (I, 15) but Linda offers more encouragement than understanding: "but you're doing wonderful, dear. You're making seventy to a hundred dollars a week." (I, 25) Despite the fact he is a failure, Linda continues to support Willy's illusion to the extent that he will never get out of it. As Miller says, "Linda sustains the illusion…she is helping to guarantee that Willy will never escape from his illusion." [25] When she actually knows the fact that Willy cannot sell anything, borrows weekly from his neighbor Charley and gives them to Linda, instead of rejecting them and making Willy accept the reality, she accepts the money as his salary in order to insulate Willy from the painful facts of living. To this extent she affords Willy not the love and understanding to a man, but the compassion to a child. Her failure in understanding and her mothering love contribute to the psychological condition—the "loneliness" —which leads Willy to adultery, an act that in turn leads to Biff's disillusionment with his father.

Linda deceives herself by sharing her husband's dreams to the extent that she believes in the illusion of her husband as the successful salesman perhaps more than Willy himself does. When Willy does want to get out of his dream and gets a chance to give up selling to manage his brother Ben's timber interests in Alaska—the place and the job he fits best, instead of encouraging him to be himself—to be a carpenter, and to identify himself with real and fundamental values, Linda urges him to remain as he is by beautifying his selling job and boosting his sales.[26] Linda persuades Willy "that you've got a beautiful job here…you're doing well enough, Willy….You're well liked, and the boys love you" (II, 85).

Linda has the same dreams as Willy, she dreams and obliges her sons to be part of unreal world in which everything is good. For example, when Biff has a meeting with Oliver in order to ask him a job, she asks him if: "You got your comb?" Here, the comb is symbol of appearance, the thing that makes impression upon others: "Did Mr. Oliver see you?...Well, you wait there then. And make a nice impression on him, darling. Just don't perspire too much before you see him." (II, 53) Linda, in her acceptance of Willy's dreams and her support of his dreams and her refusal to challenge them, adds to her husband's destruction. For Linda, Willy is her only focus and she has reduced her own life to this single focus. She gives all her power and energy to support Willy's illusions, including her love for Biff and Happy.[27]

Willy deceives himself by obliging his sons to be part of a world, they do not belong to. Biff says that they are not successful "because they don't belong in this nuthouse of a city!" (I, 43) Nevertheless, Willy admits that he is not a good father: "Because sometimes I'm afraid that I'm not teaching them the right kind of — Ben, how should I teach them" (I, 36) which is true as he treats his wife badly: "He always, always wiped the floor with her. Never had an ounce of respect for her." (I, 39) Not only that, Willy offers his sons terrible advice. For example Linda notices that Biff is: "too rough with the girls, and all the mothers are afraid of him!" (I, 23) Instead of rebuking him or even advancing him, Willy claims that "There's nothing the matter with him! You want him to be a worm like Bernard? He's got spirit, personality" (I,27) Willy also overlooks Biff's thievery. Instead of disciplining his son about the

theft, Willy laughs about the incident and says, "Coach'll probably congratulate you on your initiative!" (I, 40) Willy rises being "well liked" over all virtues when he suggests that Biff can get away with stealing because of his popularity. In the end, Biff's tendency to steal continually stands in the way of his path to success.[28]

Narindar Pradhan, a critic of Miller's work, speaks of the success theme in terms of the guilt it causes to Willy. The two sources of Willy's guilt, Pradhan tells about are two effects of the success dream, one is direct, i.e. his own failure, and the other is indirect, i.e. Biff's failure. He states that: "Willy Loman's guilt has two sources. One is the failure of his 'success' dream. Over a long life of illusions, Willy makes one false move after another in pursuit of easy success . . . The second, and perhaps the more painful, cause of his guilt is his feeling that he has failed his children . . . [A]s Willy sees his son go down in the world over the years, his burden and his responsibility in his son's failure become almost unbearable."[29]

May be Willy feels guilty because he realizes that his family holds Biff responsible for his abnormal behavior. Biff knows his father affair and Willy instead of handling the situation he throws Biff : "out of this house, remember that . . . Because I know he's a fake and he doesn't like anybody around who knows! . . . Just don't lay it all at my feet. It's between me and him—that's all I have to say." (I, 57–58) Not only that, it is also noticed that Biff uses two variants of the same utterance; first when he tells Happy "Just don't lay it all to me," and now he says to Linda "Just don't lay it all at my feet." In addition, when Willy asks Biff, not to curse in the house, Biff replies "Since when did you get so clean?" (I, 63) This utterance presupposes that Willy has done something unethical or immoral, and consequently Biff shows no respect to him, otherwise he would not dare say so.[30]

The guilt and betrayal are closely related to each other. That is to say Willy's affair with the woman in Boston, however, does not only deprive him of his son's love and respect, but it also deprives him of peace of mind. Whenever he sees Linda mending stockings, he feels guilty, because he used to give Linda's stockings to his woman in Boston:

WILLY, noticing her mending: What's that?
LINDA: Just mending my stockings. They're so expensive— [Willy interrupts]
WILLY, angrily, taking them from her: I won't have you mending stockings in this house! Now throw them out! (I, 39)

Willy gets nervous when he sees the stockings in Linda's hands. This indicates that he is sorry about what he was doing: giving Linda's stockings to the woman in Boston, and does not want anything that reminds him of his past relationship with the woman, otherwise he would not mind the stockings at all. Peter Spalding, a critic of Miller's work, in this regard, observes that "Even at this moment of hope [the prospect of getting a new job], Willy is reminded of his unfaithfulness when Linda kisses him goodbye, carrying a stocking that she has been mending" [31]

Willy deceives himself by telling his sons, "that a man can end with diamonds here on the basis of being liked!" (II, 79) Because, as Willy observes, a rich man is always well liked, being well liked, he concludes, must be how poor men become wealthy for this reason. He believes that being well liked is sufficient currency for obtaining success in the business world. Of course, Willy's logic depends on a very superficial view, because he substitutes form for content—"It's not what you say, it's how you say it". (I, 58) He mistakes the image of popularity for the reality, ignoring, for example, the obvious fact that, for some rich men, being "well liked" is not the source of their wealth but its effect.[32] Charley, Willy's friend shows that: "Why must

everybody like you? Who liked J. P. Morgan? Was he impressive? In a Turkish bath he'd look like a butcher. But with his pockets on he was very well liked." (II,70)

As Biff observes, however, Willy "had the wrong dreams" (Requiem 132). We must wonder, although the question is rarely raised, why the protagonist chooses to stick to his dream of business success when his ability and his pleasure clearly lie in working with his hands. The answer can be found in the American dream's promise to remediate Willy's ontological insecurity which has apparently overwhelmed him since his abandonment in early childhood by his father and older brother Ben. The early loss of these two role models, with whose idealized memory, Willy could never contest, has left him, in his own words, "feeling kind of temporary about himself " (I, 46) or, in psychoanalytic terms, narcissistically wounded—humiliated by his own powerlessness. The resulting need for a reassuring father explains the otherwise mystifying importance for Willy of the Dave Singleman story: the old salesman, whose popularity and resourcefulness allowed him to make a good living even at the age of eighty-four, fits Willy's idealized image of his own father. The protagonist's obsession with image throughout the play underscores this insecurity, for it bespeaks the narcissist, the man who must continually bolster the surface of his personality by finding its positive reflection in the world around him because that surface has no firm ground of its own to support it from within.[33]

Obviously, Willy found in Dave Singleman a substitute father figure. Singleman had explored and imposed his will (through selling) upon a vast territory, as Father Loman had, but Dave Singleman had managed it in a civilized and comfortable way: in a train rather than a wagon, a hotel room rather than around a fire, and with the Green World transformed into the ease of the green velvet slippers, which he wore even in his death.[34] The myth of Dave Singleman is equally as strong for Willy as the myth of his father, imaging as it does for him the perfect life and death, Dave Singleman died the "death of a salesman, with hundreds of salesmen and buyer sat his funeral and sadness on a lotta trains for months after that". (81)

On the other hand, Singleman's name, "single man" implies his lack of dependence on women, and he demonstrates to Willy that a life of material comfort without pioneer ruggedness can still be manly. The realm of comfort had probably been associated in Willy's mind with his mother. Through Dave Singleman's model, Willy realizes that it is possible to establish himself as "well liked" in an all-male community outside of and larger than the male immediate family. This community is the Business World, which provides more stability and comfort and more variety of and competition among consumer goods than those handcrafted in the vast outdoors. In the face of both temptations to choose the Green World, Willy chooses the Business World, the realm of his surrogate father, Dave Singleman.[35]

On other hand, Willy's guilt in neglecting Happy and focusing on Biff, results in turning Happy into womanizer. For Happy, women are commodities used to increase his sign exchange value. He is not, as Brian Parker suggests, "compulsively competitive in sex and business for no reason at all".[36] Happy uses women to make him feel that he is able to "get" something that he can "not get from his career. Because he covets the attention his father has always lavished on Biff, Happy has invested a good deal of his identity in following in Willy's footsteps, in achieving the business success his father desired for both boys."[37]

Happy lives in the town in which he grows up and works in sales: he is one of the two assistants to the assistant buyer for a local firm. Although he makes enough money to support his apartment, car, and social life, he has not achieved the big success, the wealth, power, and prestigious title—that Willy's dreams had reserved

for his sons. Therefore, Happy feels disappointed, cheated: a world in which he must take orders from men he "can outbox, outrun, and outlive" (I,17) is, he feels, an unjust world.[38]

For both Willy and Happy, the achievement of financial success is tied to masculine self-image. Their metaphors for success involve winning fights and killing opponents. "Knocked 'ern cold in Providence, slaughtered 'em in Boston," Willy tells his young sons upon returning home from a sales trip (I, 27), using the same kind of language, his brother Ben had used in advising him to go to Alaska: "Screw on your fists and you can fight for a fortune up there". (II, 78) This link between business success and masculinity is, of course, one reason why both men use women to feed their egos, to make up for their disappointments in the business world. It is no mere accident, then, that Happy abandons his father in the restaurant to pursue women directly upon learning that the plan for a Loman Brothers sporting-goods company is down the drain.[39]

In Requiem, the final moments of Miller's modem tragedy, Biff is alone in his empathic understanding. Even Charley does not understand the meaning of Biff s final words about his father: "He had the wrong dreams. All, all, wrong [. . . .] He never knew who he was". (138) As John Hagopian says, "the dialogue of the Requiem shows that Biff is a new man, that he—and only he—truly understood his father." [40] Happy is "ready to fight" after Biff states that his father: "had the wrong dreams", and Charley responds to this statement by saying: "to Biff Nobody dose blame this man. You don't understand: Willy was a salesman". (l38) But as Linda suggests previously to these sympathetic words by Charley, "He was so wonderful with his hands", (138) and it is this very suggestion which activates Biff s final, telling statement about his father's dreams. Willy Loman was more himself, relatively free of guilt and shame, when he worked with his hands, than at any other time in his life.[41]

The chain of psychological causation is dramatized in *Death of a Salesman*. Behind Willy Loman's destructive, culturally endorsed dreams of success, as well as his infidelity and the guilt associated with it. This helps to increase the feelings of shame. Moreover, such feelings lie behind Biff's failure to live up to the familial and societal ideal of success, as well as his habit of stealing and the guilt associated with it. For son and father shame rules over love to the extent that the ways in which they act toward one another serve to increase feelings of guilt and feelings of alienation in both of them. [42]

Both plays are similar and represent a working out of Miller's theories: common men proclaiming their dignity by devotion to success "myths" and being cast down by the moral order of the universe. Keller seems to understand at the end, but one doubts that he is really intelligent enough to grasp the complete truth; Willy Loman's mind is at times unbalanced, a condition which surely negates the possibility of convincing enlightenment.

The purpose of Miller in *All My Sons* is to make Joe realize through various experiences that the sense of guilt, betrayal, and self-deception is larger than the family's interest: That one should not try to achieve success by betraying others. The play *All My Sons* shows how the impulse of guilt and betrayal when left ungoverned, can wreak havoc on the individual, his family and his society. Joe's problem is that he cannot admit that he personally has feasible connection with his world, his universe or his society. What is right in Joe's ethos is the familial obligation, the father's duty to create something for his son. Joe is a man of limited view point. For Joe nothing is bigger than his family but Chris believes in the theory of achieving success without betraying others.

In *Death of a Salesman*, Willy's dreams and self-image seem to be rightfully his. What is interesting, however, is how Willy's dreams and self-image are turned against him and how the sense of guilt, betrayal, self-deception and reality participate in adding to his suffering. Instead of facilitating his business deals and consequently leading him to success, Willy's Boston affair made him lose his son's love and respect as well as peace of mind. It also, as a negative consequence, deprives him of achieving success through Biff. His self-image, too, makes him lose sight of his true abilities and set his sights on false prestige and popularity. To claim having these qualities, Willy indulges in lies and pretensions. His dream of having his own business crashes with reality as do his hopes of a New York job and a salary and popularity; and thus his dream of leaving something to be remembered by also turns into a source of confusion, depression, and abnormal behavior. What is interesting in this is Willy's determination to achieve or leave something to be remembered by despite all the forces working against him, which are successfully demonstrated through the structural elements of the play.

Notes

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[2.] Baljinder Sahdra and Paul Thagard, *Self-Deception and Emotional Coherence* (Waterloo: University Of Waterloo, 2003) 213.

[3.] Behav Ther, *Betrayal: a psychological analysis* (Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd, 2009) 1-3.

[4.] Jean Gould . *Modern American Playwrights*. (Bombay : Bombay Popular Prakashan, 1969.) 124.

[5.] Enoch Brater, *The Theatrical Gamut: Notes for a Post-Beckettian Stage* (New York: The University Of Michigan Press, 1995) 108.

[6.] Noorbakhsh Hooti and Farzaneh Azizpour, "The Sense of Isolation in Arthur Miller's All My Sons" *Cross Cultural Communication*, Vol. 7: No. 1 (2011) < http:// cscanada. net/index. php/ccc/ article/download/ j. ccc.1923670020110701.002/1031> (accessed December 14, 2013) 25.

[7.] Shweta Singh, *A Thematic study of the plays of Arthur Miller* (New York: Author House, 2010) 28.

[8.] C. W. E. Bigsby, *Arthur Miller: A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2005) 89.

[9.] Harold Clurman, *Lies Like Truth: Theatre Reviews and Essays*, (New York: Macmillan Press, 1985) 67.

[10.] Terry Otten. *The Temptation of Innocence in the Dramas of Arthur Miller*. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002) 8.

[11.] Xiaojuan Yao, Tiannan Zhou and Yufei Long "Confined Spirits' Struggle: Housewife-mother Figures in Arthur Miller's Early Plays", *English Language and Literature Studies*, Vol. 2 : No. 3. (2012) < http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ells/article/download/19853/13088> (December 20, 2013) 33.

[12.] Ibid, 34.

[13.] June Schlueter and James K. Flanagan. *Arthur Miller* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1987) 41.

[14.] Kay Stanton, "Women and the American Dream of Death of a Salesman ", *Feminist Re-reading of Modern American Drama* (1989) < http:// teacherweb. com/CA/Westlake HighSchool/ Schlehner/ DOS-article-Women-and-the-American-Dream.pdf > (accessed January 3, 2014) 135.
[15.] Samuel A. Yorks, "Joe Keller and His Sons," *Western Humanities Review*, Vol. 13: No. 4 (Autumn 1959) 403.
[16.] Bigsby, 93.
[17.] Whitney Dramaturg, "The guilty twists the law" < http:// literatureatmi.files.Wordpress com /2013/06/guilt-and-betrayal.pptx > 4.
[18.] Bigsby,90.
[19.] Kay Stanton, 148.
[20.] Pamela Loos, " The Family Dynamic in Miller's *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*" < http:// Salem press. com/ Store/ pdfs/ miller_ critical_insights.pd > (accessed 13/1 /2014).
[21.] Harold Bloom. *Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007) 36.
[22.] Datar Unnati, "Psychoanalytic Study Of The Plays Of Arthur Miller," *International Journal on English Language and Literature*, Vol. 1: No. 1 < http://www.iairs.org/PAPERS_V1-I1/PAGE%2023%20-%2029.pdf > (accessed March 2014) 24.
[23.] Ibid, 25.
[24.] Kay Stanton, 124-126.
[25.] Arthur Miller, *Conversations with Arthur Miller*, Matthew C. Roudane, (ed.) (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1987) 370.
[26.] Xiaojuan Yao, Tiannan Zhou and Yufei Long, 35.
[27.] Ibid.
[28.] Ibid, 34.
[29.] Narindar Pradhan, Modern American Drama: A Study in Myth and Tradition. (New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1978.) 67-68.
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[32.] Kay Stanton,134
[33.] Ibid,
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[36.] Brian Parker "*Point of View in Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman*." University of Toronto Quarterly 35.2 (1966): 144-57. Rpt. *In Arthur Miller: A Collection of Critical Essays.* Robert W. Corrigan (ed.) (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall,1969) 95-109.
[37.] Datar Unnati, 74.
[38.] Ibid.
[39.] Ibid, 75-79.
[40.] Walter J. Meserve, *The Merrill studies in Death of a salesman* (Columbus: Merrill, 1972) 41.
[41.] Fred Ribkoff, *Tragedy's Transcultural Ethical Psychology: Shame, The Denial of the Body, and the Window of Empathy in Tragic Drama* (PhD. thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1989.) 248.
[42.] Ibid, 250.

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