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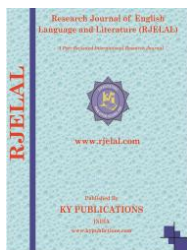
ALIENATION AND MODERNISM IN THE PLAYS OF ARTHUR MILLER

Dr. SOHAM CHAUDHARY

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Cambridge Institute of Technology, Ranchi, Jharkhand

Email: 89soha@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

In his dramas he depicted different aspect of modern society and their thinking, socio cultural, psychological problems, and human sufferings. Arthur Miller is a great American dramatist. He is very popular far and wide. He is a great modern dramatist in the sense that he raises almost all important problems of the contemporary society and his vision is universal. Whatever he writes in reference to the American society stands true to the whole mankind. The source of his wide popularity is hidden in it where "All my Sons" had 328 performances, while "Death of a Salesman" ran for 742 performances in the history of twentieth century the American drama views the play of Arthur Miller as commendable and analyzed it as dramatic literature.

Gradual changes and mental frustration in the characters of Millers drama artistically portrayed along the course of development of the story and also in his writings. He also picked the realistic theme among the American society, in this context; here we would like to study Miller's dramas as an American dramatist and his understanding of the nuanced development in the character of his dramas along with the thematic patterns.

Keywords: contemporary society, modernism, dramatist, human value, alienation

Introduction

Here, we will analyze "Death of a Salesman" in an attempt to mirror the struggling modern characters that line in the world of postmodernism but are the salve of the preventive beliefs of modernism. This play is the story of all human beings who are in search of success, love, pride and ambitions but are oscillating between the modern and post modern values. They find themselves disintegrated and isolated in the cruel language of modern and consumer world. This study tries to show the entrapped modern man who finds the modern language weird and its values as resisting forces against the fossilized the narratives.

Alienation:

"Death of a Salesman" focuses on the aspect of isolation that has brought Miller, artistic success as well as international recognition. This play has been viewed by many as a caustic attack on the American dream of achieving wealth and success. The play made Arthur-Miller and the character Willy Loman household names. "Death of a salesman" offers number of intriguing interpretations. It is about the paradoxes of being alive in the technological society, it is about the sense of isolation brought by technological advance and people pay for progress. It is a tale of violence with in the family, without individual suppression by placing him below the overbearing needs of capitalist society. It is a play

about a man who kills himself because he is not liked. It expresses all those feelings of a society falling to pieces which we have, feelings that, to him are one of the reason for the play's continuing popularity. "Death of a salesman" is a new type of serious play merging the forms of realism and expressionism to suggest new directions and possibilities for all of the world drama. The play deals with various elements such as fall of the grand narratives, disintegration of family ties, distance between illusion and reality, the sense of isolation, lack of understanding and the struggle for being. There is a no crime in "Death of a salesman" and hence no ultimate culpability for only a baffled man and his sons trying to find their way through a world of images, dazzling dreams and fantasies, in the knowledge that they have failed by the standard they have chosen to believe are fundamental. Arthur Miller, one of the most famed writers of our time, explores in his writings the theme isolation. He interweaves this theme with his characters. Willy Loman is a man who is alienated and lives in isolation. The theme of isolation is a focal point of the story, since it is what drove him to his suicide. He is a perfect example of a man alienated by the society that is controlled by money and power. The materialistic world makes trouble for him instead of helping him. "Death of a salesman" is a real masterpiece which breaks the boundaries of time and place and goes beyond the specific epoch. Family is the first unit of the society which has important roles in man's life. It is the source of power and support for its members. In the Loman's family unity and coherence have been fading away. This family has only four members, but they are as far as separated islands. Lack of understanding and generation gap are very obvious in the Loman's which lead to their disconnection. Therefore, disintegration and isolation are outstanding concerns of modernism, which have been portrayed very creatively in "Death of a salesman" Willy's memories of the business for which he has worked throughout his life is that it had once been a family connected at a human level.

The characters in "Death of a salesman" find themselves in an oozy ocean of dualism. Duality of theme, duality of self, duality among the characters and duality of time are quite vivid in the play. Willy as the father of family, who traditionally must act as a

unifying core in the orbit of family, is completely absent and Biff is separated from his father. The relationship between Willy and his son is central. There are magnetic forces that paradoxically pull them together and thrust them apart. Biff wants to save Willy, and at the same time to free himself. He is angry at Willy's weakness, helplessness, and at Willy's love for him. Biff and his father see the world differently. The essence of this drama is contained within these tensions. In the modern society, father and son are a divided self. Their identities are ineluctably intertwined. For Willy Loman, Biff was his justification and vindication. In refusing to embrace his father's dreams he was, thus, denying him fulfillment, expiation, that sense of identity that comes from passing the torch from generation to generation. For Biff, his father stands between himself and his life. He is the part that has to be transcended, the also the debt that must be discharged. There is a race on, a race for Willy's life and Biff's soul. Therefore, drama is born out of a situation in which the individual can not walk away. Willy desperately needs Biff to embrace him and his dream. He needs the affection and success of his sons to destroy his failure. Biff, by contrast desperately needs to cut the link between himself and Willy. The theme of displacement is quite tangible throughout the play. It is a sense of feeling alienated towards time and place. Miller, through his drama tries to make human relations felt between individuals and the larger structure of the world. Willy was depicted as a man of his time and yet also, somehow, timeless, Loman attracted international audiences and continued to interest them even to the present day. Willy had the capacity to enjoy life but he was dissatisfied with the quality of that life, a dissatisfaction which led him to illusion and isolation. He created an illusion to protect himself and to prevent him from having to really address the problem. Willy attached his life to a myth which proposed a life without limits but who found himself trapped in a shrinking physical, social and psychological space of capitalism. Willy was a man who killed his loneliness in Boston hotel with a woman whose attraction seemed to lie less in her sexuality than in the access that she could not grant the buyer, the consolation she offered for his sense

of failure, a woman herself not without a degree of desperation. Willy was not so much talking to each other as stating their dream like, disjointed and intensely compressed positions, since he conducted their internal conversations in the presence of others. Willy wanted to make an impression to be remembered after his death, and gave something to Biff and Happy, and his inability to do any of these that haunted him. Once he realized his life had been futile: he was old, and had achieved little, scorned by his boss and his sons, which marked Willy comes to face, the absurdity of life. Willy Loman also, lost his contact with the natural world. He could do no more now than just spread seeds on barren ground but he had also lost touch with those around him. Willy was a representative figure of modern man who was separated from himself, from his fellow men, and from nature. Therefore, he had changed into a commodity. Market conditions forced him to be separated from society and turned to the only place he thought he belonged to, that is his children. In the case of Willy, his children by rejecting his love made him alienated from his ultimate excuse of life. Willy moved with the air and from one moment to the next, one feeling to the next, and in a sense believed everything at once.... that he is loved, contemptible; is lost, had conquered; is afraid, nothing frightens him and that everything does.

Arthur Miller's drama 'Incident at Vichy' is an essay about the relationship between past – modernism and justice. It is an essay that asks what we learn from the fact; that someone who rejects the nation of "integrity" as either a psychological, moral, or textual quality. I want to stress the magnitude of the apparent clash between the spirit of Post-modernity and the idea of integrity. This is a different type of Drama in which he shows his psychological, moral and scientific view. It is seen that Post-modernism has no philosophical content at all, but it is its hospitality brought out by series of arguments.

Modernism:

The researcher saw a magazine cartoon that nearly summed up a particular idea of the relationship of morality and moral philosophy to science and scientific reasoning. This vision of the relationship of science to morality was an interesting

one. It depended partly as the researcher thought on assumptions about the *epistemological* foundations of science and morality. Science can and does, produce reliable knowledge. It can be rightly said that building castles are always built on sand; every moral theory rests on a leap of faith that is always implicitly challenged as we look out and see others who hold beliefs very different to our own. For some integrity is attractive because we have given up on the notion of objectively correct moral positions and seen only consistency with in a single man. The alert reader will realize the human problem of contemporary society and effects of the modernity in human relationship. Earlier in this essay is modernism is described as the theory as the Art of the *Lagrange* point : A proactive built on setting traditions against each other, simultaneously affirming and undermining each finding the space to work in the gravitational pulls between two life-worlds. Obviously, this is not the only kind of moral, aesthetic or legal activity we engage in the idea of totalized modernism is both unattractive and silly. But it is a kind of moral, political and aesthetic activity and an important one at that time/situation. If confirmation of this notion is possible, it would lie only through introspection and cultural examination that takes shape and idea. When we think of one's own moral decisions and not the sanitized version we present the outside world, but the internal Jocean stream of notions, emotions reasoning and ideas are not to be seen.

Second thought of this can be that it was the impression that the modernism had completely abandoned and integrity on every front ethical artistic, intellectual and personal is seen, it can be also said that some may have a different view to this concept and regret it.

Miller's account of one of the most bizarre and tragic episodes in American history in his original play the crucible the hysteria of the witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts in 1662. The willingness of its protagonist John Proctor to publicly acknowledge his own failures while refusing to falsely implicate others, led most people to view this play as a transparent allegory of the communist "witch hunts" of the late 1940s and early 1950s. It was criticized from both the right and the left for presumed defect in the comparison. Miller himself would have been

called before the house of Un-American activities Committee in 1956 and a result of his testimony, he would be cited and subsequently convicted of congress, but his conviction was later overturned and turned to be appeal. Freed from the passions of its time and examined purely on its own terms, *'The crucible'* remains as witnessed by the recent film made form it a morally complex and sea singly powerful work, one that is increasingly recognized as one of Miller's finest accomplishments. This play can be discussed in many different ways but among the ways we have studied a play is a focus on character, action dramatic devices and dramatic structures.

A view from the bridge has an unusually complicated performance history. It was originally a screenplay called *'The hook'* written by Miller with assistance form *Elia Kazan*, which had previously directed the play wrights *'All my sons'* and *'Death of a salesman'*. The script dealing with it then did with *'waterfront corruption and graft'* and was eventually withdrawn by Miller in response to the Hollywood studios. Complaints were made that it was Un-American, Hook's basic themes would nonetheless resurface in Kazan's 1954 film, 'on the waterfront' inspired now by the true story of a Brooklyn clock worker who informed on two illegal immigrants, Miller re-coined *'The hook'* as *'A view from the bridge'*. The play, a one act verse drama that had Mild failure on Broadway in 1955; and Critics found its austere style un-involving Miller had created a play that would simply tell the a tale himself which he had heard, with no attempt to gain audience sympathy for Eddies or anyone else's plight. Consequently, nothing was allowed onstage that did not directly contribute to the action but miller ultimately found that he had created a cold play rather than a fascinating and suspenseful one. In 1956, a view from the bridge was revised for a new London production. The verse became a phase, and the length was expanded into two acts, and the characters were allowed to speak more thus it became more human and more sympathetic.

A period of nine years separates *'A view from the bridge'* from the staging of *'After the fall'* and *'Incident at Vichy'* in 1964. During that time, in addition to his difficulties with HUAC, Miller was divorced from his first wife, married movie star

Marilyn Monroe and then divorced her, but Monroe committed suicide one year later in 1962. Miller's depiction of Monroe in *'After the fall'*, for the most part a travesty of a play was poorly received by critics and the public at large. Its unflattering portrait was viewed as uncharitable, an instance of speaking ill of the dead.

'After the fall' is a pretentious and cheaply despairing work, its overall straining for significance can be gauged by the fact that the set of the play, which has directed by none other than *Elia Kazan*, was dominated by the presence of a concentration camp tower. The play takes place in the mind of Quentin, a New York lawyer, who recalls various experiences with his three wines in particular. Miller attempts to link this individual coldness and failing with the world-historical catastrophe of the Holocaust Quentin cannot mourn for his dead parents, he attempted to strangle Moggie in one of the scenes. The play rejects the 'fantasy of innocence'. In *'After the fall'* we can also see the suffering, from a type of false self-criticism that abounds in the modern theater. The character generally rooted in autobiography that beats his breast and proclaims, "*I'm a swine! I'm a swine!*" precisely as a means of avoiding the most troubling questions posed by his life situation. The problem with Miller's characterization of Monroe is not chiefly that he is unkind to her. He had the right, after all to portray her as he thought she was. Miller-Monroe coupling in real life was not long lined or had happy affair, although it began idyllically enough. Monroe, Miller discovered, was a deeply unhappy and insecure woman; in addition, she was addicted to barbiturates. Her film roles, as a "*dump blonde*" a "*joke*" quoted in her own words that deeply frustrated and depressed her. In *'After the fall'*, Quentin/Miller is appalled by Maggie / Monroe's neurotic behavior (the character is a popular singer in the play) and the extent of her self-destructive tendencies. One is tempted to ask: what did Miller expect? That he had so little insight into what the fearsome machinery of the entertainment business could do to the vulnerable human personality was a measure of Miller's own limited grasp of American reality. Moreover, why did this supposed critic of the American dream fail to shine a light on his own

obvious fascination with celebrity? To have truly subjected his own fantasies about movie stars, “sex symbols” and the rest to a critical analysis that might have made a promising starting point for a drama.

Summary and conclusion

All in all, this study examined the Modernism and Alienation and expressionism in Arthur Miller’s plays. This study argued that his plays employed both naturalism and expressionism in author’s portrayal characters, losing struggle against social, familial and economic forces beyond his control, and that these literary and philosophical approaches are used to show the breakup of the family relationship (an expressionistic effect) as well as the cause of that break-up (through expressionistic devices) at the same time, Miller was not restricted by the traditional uses of expressionism and naturalism in his plays, choosing instead to use those approaches according to his own needs and interpretations.

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