



ARTHUR MILLER'S VIEW ON THE ROLE OF FAMILY IN MODERN DRAMA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DEATH OF A SALESMAN

Ramchandra Y. Medhekar

Assistant Professor,

Department of English, Education faculty

K. H. College, Gargoti. Dist Kolhapur (MS) -416209

ABSTRACT:

Miller is realist. His plays deal with real (or lifelike) characters and events. His characters use in idiom of the common man. Their problems relate to every common man of this world. Their joys are our won; their miseries like those of ours. Miller's realism is based on the observations of life. He studies not merely the environment but the inside of his characters too. His plays are not an escape from romanticism either. Miller believes that romanticism is a part and parcel of a majority of people. So he favours a synthesis of determinism and a paradox of will. His plays are concerned with the identity of self.

Keywords - Realist, Common Man, Miseries, Realism, Observations Of Life, Part And Parcel.

INTRODUCTION:

In his essay, "The Family in Modern Drama", Miler has discussed the role of family in modern drama. He regards family as a polls. Family to him is not merely a means to delineate the affectional ties between the members of a family and their relations, etc. "Sentimentalism", says Miller, "is perfectly all right, but it is nowhere near a great challenge, and to pursue it is not going to bring us closer to the fated mission of the drama." The problem which concerns Miller is: How may man make for himself a home in that vastness of strangers and how may he transform that vastness into a home?" In other words, Miller in his plays tries to find out an answer to the problem. "How can man develop for himself a transitional polls that may bridge the gap between the private home of the

family and the public home of that new unity towards which he believes the world to be moving?"

Like Eliot, Miller also sees home as a place where one starts from. It is not the duty of the playwright to draw up blueprints for a new society, but to give the news of the present: it is the drama's "capacity to open up the present? When Miller was writing *A View from the Bridge*, he observed "It's true to say, I think, that the language of the family is the language of the private life prose. The language of society, the language of the public life, is verse."

Miller therefore, regards family not as a microcosm but as something "laying siege to the fortress of unrelatedness." He tries to relate the family to the larger group, the society, in inescapable and life giving ways. According to Daniel Schneider, the basic and hidden motivation of ' *Death of a Salesman's* is the following : The guilt of a younger brother for his hatred of his older brother, for Willy Loman is also a younger brother This is the dream of a younger, unpreferred son. No other analysis, it seems to me, can account for the increasing frequency of the vision of Ben, Willy's older and envied brother. In a sense. Every first son "strikes it rich" in a younger son's eyes.

This statement is true in parts only. It fails to apply to Happy Loman, it does not apply to Chris Keller either. Both these characters are very much aware of the advantages they have over their elder brothers. Nor is Willy's dream of Ben so simple. It is the role of family such as father or mother is given any place in the play, because in the three Her plays brings disaster because of the excessive veneration they have given him (Willy Loman). As mentioned by Schneider, Willy Loman "is not in the eyes of his sons just a man, but a good in decay", and because of the circumstances in which that disillusion comes about.

Whereas O'Neill's plays touch upon the problem of respect, lack of proper affection, obedience, etc. within a family, Arthur Miller's plays view the disintegration of a family. In the Loman household, resentment, jealousy, and transferred guilt play havoc. Linda reproaches her sons for want of due respect and proper consideration for their father. In his plays, however, the family as a force is not centripetal but centrifugal That is why the dissolution of the family is not painful. Miller does so to assert the American individualism. The individual

who can survive the inevitable disintegration of the family and who can find for himself another role in the larger social group can become "at home in the word." It is on this thesis that Miller builds his plays.

In Henry Popkin's opinion, Miller's implicit indictment of sex as a wicked influence is remarkably consistent and emphatic. But this is not true of the plays *The Man Who Had All the Luck* and *All My Sons*. What is criticized in Miller's plays is sex in its anti-family and anti-social manifestations. Willy's sordid liaison with the woman in Boston, Happy's seduction of the executive's fiancée, John Proctor's adultery with Abigail, Eddie Carbone's incestuous promptings to a bad passion posing danger to the integrity of the man and the solidarity of the family. Many a time Miller shows confidence in marriage as a satisfactory partnership. Nevertheless, sex is not so constant and deep obsession with Miller as it is with Tennessee Williams.

Death of a salesman can be called a family drama also because it is a tragedy not merely the tragedy of one person, the father, but equally the tragedy of Linda, the mother, and Biff, the son.

Death of a salesman is a family drama somewhat like Shakespeare's *King Lear* whose theme is the unnaturalness between 'the child and the parent', "the bond crack'd twixt son and father." In "Salesman" also a son instead finds corruption (Willy's adultery), and serves the bond of mutual respect ("you fake! you phony little fake!").

Other family relationships touched upon in the play are those of a husband and wife. A wife not merely need love her husband, she must understand him as well. Linda Loman, despite several virtues, patience, courage and a sense of responsibility, unconsciously becomes instrumentally in Willy's tragedy.

The play further reflects another son's approach to his father and his family. Happy is another black sheep, and the father dies just to see his sons well-settled. Happy, also a bachelor in his thirties, has become "Big Spot" a seventy-five-dollar-a-week merchandizing man who ignores his aging father's plight and spends his money on woman and liquor.

CONCLUSION:

Nevertheless, we should not forget that *Death of a Salesman* is “a play about the last terrible day of a man about the flood of facts and lies, of reality and fantasy. Of the actual and the potential that made him and killed him. Miller did not intend the play to be a family drama. It is by sheer accident it is such. The main purpose of the playwright was to show what happens to a man when he loses the grip of the forces of life, when he cherishes wrong values wrongly nourished by society. When he fails to understand himself and his environment.

REFERENCES:

1. Zygmunt Adamczewski : *The Play Death of a Salesman*, deals with Willy Loman’s loss of identity. 1963
2. Eric. Bentley : *The Play presents the “little man as victim,” the social drama blurring the tragedy.* 1949
3. Eleanor Clark : *The Play is a crude Marxist attack on the brutal capitalist “system” in America.* 1949
4. Winfred Dusenburg : *Death of a Salesman illustrates a theme of a loneliness since each member of Willy’s family feels isolated.* 1960
5. Howard A. Fuller : *The Play proper properly shows the failures and strength of “the hero of American Society”- the salesman.* 1949
6. Esther Jackson : *Death of a Salesman represents “perhaps most nearly nature myth about human sufferings in an industrial age.”*